DRAMATIC POEMS

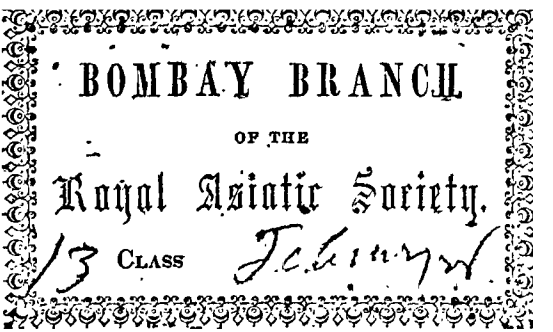
UXMAL:

AN ANTIQUE LOVE STORY.

MACEE DE LEODEPART:

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY JOHN A. HERAUD.



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UXMAL:

An Antique Love Story.

MACÉE DE LÉODEPART

An Historical Romance.

JOHN A. HERAUD.

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UXMAL.

MACÉE DE LÉODEPART.

That engine of the world, mysterious Love,
The way that Fate predestinated, when
'Twas first infused i' the embryo; it being then
That which espoused the active Form unto
Matter, and from that passive being drew
Divine Ideas; which, subsisting in
Harmonious Nature's highest sphere, do win,
In the perfection of our age, a more
Expansive power; and, Nature's common store
Still to preserve, unites affections by
The mingled atoms of the serious eye.

CHAMBERLAYNE.

TO

BENJAMIN W. RICHARDSON, A.M., M.D., F.R.S.,

WHOSE SKILL AS A PHYSICIAN IS ONLY EQUALLED BY

HIS ZEAL AS A REFORMER, THESE

Dramatic Poems

ARE INSCRIBED.

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UXMAL:

An Antique Love Story,

IN

SIX CHAPTERS.

UXMAL is one of the ruined cities of America. Its architectural remains bear indications of Theban origin and serpent-worship.

Out of these hints, the imagination of the Author constructed a romantic story and a mythologic poem in the dramatic form. The competent reader will perceive that he has likewise derived more than one suggestion from Dante's *Vita Nuova*.

The manners being ideal, the stage accessories and costumes must also be supposed to be so. They should be selected with exclusive reference to the picturesque—a condition evidently favourable to the exhibition of the highest effects, both scenic and histrionic.

The reader may assist his fancy by reference to the numerous engravings in Mr. John L. Stephen's "Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan." (12th edition, 1846. Murray.)

Mrs. Mowatt, in her Memoirs, mentions that, during her engagement at the Olympic theatre, it was intended to produce this poem as a drama. One serious difficulty was the cost of its production as a spectacle, which was estimated at two thousand pounds. But the then manager, there is too much reason to believe, saw his way to obtaining the needful capital. The author was truly fortunate in escaping the doubtful honour of having it represented under such dangerous auspices.

The poem, it may be mentioned, is similar in kind to Shakspere's "Winter's Tale," "Cymbeline," "Midsummer Night's Dream," and "The Tempest." It endeavours to combine fancy and imagination with passion in one production.

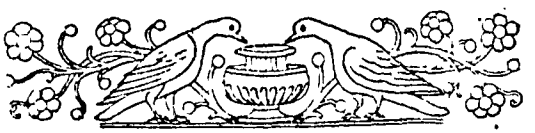
Persons Represented.

ADON (*Viceroy of Uxmal deputed by the Monarch of Thebes*).
ADONE (*his Princess*).
ONERET (*her Confidante*).
LUMON (*a Pilgrim*).
IRÉ* (*the Arch-Prelate of Uxmal*).
ZALONIA (*the Arch-Prelatess*).
LOBI (*Singing-Boy of the Temple*).
EREMO, SURIAL } (*Deacons*).
REA, MONA } (*Deaconesses—afterwards Priestess and Prophetess*).
DIO (*Ambassador from Thebes*).
SIRANI (*Steward of the Palace*).
XANA (*Priestess of the Pyramids.*)

SCENE.—THE ANCIENT CITY AND COUNTRY OF UXMAL, IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

PERIOD.—While under Theban Domination.

* Iré to be pronounced as a dissyllable throughout.



UXMAL:

AN ANTIQUE LOVE STORY.

I.

THE CELIBATES.

SCENE.—*Temple of the Serpent.*

LORI

(*A Child in appearance with a Lyre*).

Time's Curtains, from the Days of Old,
Withdraw awhile; and we behold,
In realms beyond the Atlantic main,
Uxmal, its Temple and its Fane—
In circling folds displayed on high,
The Symbol of Eternity—
The Temple of the Serpent-Lord,
The Altar where the God's adored;
And here the Youths, in solemn dance,
Now before the Shrine, advance.

[LORI *retires, and* YOUTHS *for a short time dance gravely to devotional music, followed by* ADONE, ONERET, LUMON *and* ATTENDANTS.]

Adone. What was it you said, Oneret?

Oneret. Most sacred princess,—this. The Prince, thy lord, we gather from report, may not absolve them from their vow.

Adone. No, Oneret. The far-off king, his father, monarch of Thebes, from which realm we all derive our ancestry, charged him with a command inviolable. Our Temple's rites must have a virgin priesthood, a young man and a young maiden, sworn both to purity—the loss whereof to either shall be no less than instant death. We will watch the coming trial of this great cause. Here sit we. Attend us.

[*Ascends a throne on the right, groups on either hand.*

Oneret. Is not this the wandering pilgrim from Luxor?

Adone. They call him Lumon. He is the bearer of a far different doctrine. The celibate, according to his creed, insults nature and defies grace.

Oneret. Hath he warrant for boldness?

Adone. Yes—in that he is bold. He knows much, talks well, and in both discerns a potence, gives him strange authority.

Oneret. Such charms make even heresy attractive.

Adone. Ah! but I have yet another teacher; though scarcely, I fear, a better. What my lord, the Prince, urges as precept, he disables by practice. Nay, the moment he married me, the first, I ween, had taken flight, though then unmarked. Our proper youth they

say, becomes fugitive after the same fashion; hence it happens, we grow so suddenly old. Know you this lady, Lumon?

Lumon. All knowledge is joy; but the joy of such knowledge has yet to visit my newly awakened expectation.

Adone. You say well, sir; for she, as it were, is my second self. Become thou better acquainted with Oneret, my dear friend, my heart-trusted confidante.

Lumon. Depend upon me, princess.

Adone. Break off. Here comes Irë, the most holy priest, in high discourse with the right honourable prince, Adon, my loving lord.

LORI, *between* EREMO *and* SURIAL, *leads on a* CHOIR *of* SINGING BOYS.

Lori sings.

Priests of the Serpent Lord confest,
Each in his gold and purple vest:
Ho, come ye forth at his behest.

CHORUS,

Priests, etc.

Enter IRË, ADON, ZALONIA, REA, MONA, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Irë. O, prince of Uxmal! await the ambasssdors from Thebes the fatal issue?

Adon. Even as thou hast said, far-seeing sage.

[*Adon takes a throne beside Adone. Irë ascends the steps of the altar and stands beside it. Zalonia sits on the lowest step. Rea and Mona, with Eremo and Surial, stand before them and wave censers of incense.*

Irë. Now to the purpose of this holy tide—
This annual celebration. It is my office,
In his chaste service who commands my words,
Whose endlessness yon serpent typifies,
To see that all be pure who tend his shrine,
And question make thereof this solemn morn.
—Ye sister-deacons, who the censers bear,
And add more fragrance to our sweetest prayers,
Within this sculptured dome, paying to Heaven
A three-fold homage, scents, and sounds, and sights;
Wherefore in turn ye share our meats and drinks,
Blessed with our priestly consecration,
And in your pious arms embrace the god,
Thus sanctifying also touch and taste—
All senses being hallowed—stand ye forth.
Thou, Rea, first. Say, for the year now past,
In will, and thought, and act, hast thou preserved
Thy vowèd plight to sainted chastity?

Rea. Most sacred Irë, when I made my vow,
I pledged my soul. No longer in my keeping,
A yoke was taken from me. I was free;

Only responsible to trust in him
Who made himself responsible for me,
And with my soul took my desires, thoughts, acts,
Leaving me none. The tablet of my mind
Is virgin yet.

Zalonia (*aside*). O, when it comes thy turn,
Zalonia, shalt thou shew a mind o'erwrit,
As is the marble with an epitaph,
Foretelling thy own death.

Irë (*to Rea*). I rested silent,
Dreaming thou yet wert speaking, such the music
Came with thy words. For thy devotion, Rea,
Thebes has prepared an answering recompense.
Henceforth, thou rulest in the Temple's rites,
No servile deacon, but a priestess stalled.
—Now Mona, may I question thee? Say thou,
And better Rea's answer.

Mona. All her trust
I have, and, were't not boasting, something more.
Yet what I add is but a thing so mean,
It is not worth the heeding. With my soul
I pledge this abject body—prostrate now;
[*Casting herself on the ground.*
Its feelings and its wants. Be they his care,
Myself a passive idiot, if he will.

Zalonia (*aside*). Wherefore, Zalonia, hast thou hands,
if not

To help thy various needs? Why life and health,
If not to quicken action?

Irë. Wonder, Mona,
Has held me mute. Thou art a prophetess,
And henceforth what thou speakest in the Temple
Shall be accepted for an oracle.
—But where is now Zalonia, who, with us,
Shares our arch-prelacy?

Zalonia (*rising, then kneeling*). Behold—

Irë What at our feet?

Zalonia. Behold—

Irë. No more! Go, some one; lift
Mona from her prostration:—she and Rea
Now stand aside. [*Two attendants raise Mona and lead her and Rea to aside.*
Zalonia, up—
Fairly reply to question, like thy sisters.

Zalonia. Accuse me not for atheist, if I must,
Convinced by conscience, vindicate both rights,
Body and soul; else wherefore either given?

Irë (*descending from the altar*). Zalonia, infidel!
Beware of doubt;
For death impends.

Zalonia. Be gentle, Irë. Know,
I question not, but utter revelation.
A dream in the still night has whispered me—
Spake to me in thy voice, so soft, so soothing,

I loved it, and believed it, for its voice—
Zalonia, thus it said, *thy heart is loving,*
That loving heart has been beloved, and is;
And now it has no life but in its love,
And to its object must or wedded be,
Or make a bride-bed of the wormy grave.

Irë. A dream thus tempted thee to break thy vow?

Zalonia. When it had spoken, Nature in my heart
Spake out in turn (rebellious if you will),
Exclaiming at the violation suffered,
Even in the secret palace of her laws,
And charging all upon that evil vow.
One instant only, yet the argument
Was volumed in my brain; and, waking soon,
I was its advocate.

Irë. And are you now?

Zalonia. Even now the same.

Irë. Not married—mated yet?

Zalonia. Both in my thought.

Irë. But not in very act?

Zalonia. None knows so well as thou!

Adon (rising.) It matters not—
The thought conceived is equal to the deed.
Her doom must be pronounced.

Irë. By whom?

Adon. By thee.

Irë (*aside*). My heart, be strong. (*Aloud*) Zalonia,
hear thy doom.
I doom thee by the ninefold mystery—
By that which being nothing is yet all;
By the perpetual circles that revolved
Before the ages or the starry worlds;
By the beginning unbegun, the end
Unending; by duration permanent;
By time unchanging and the changing hours,
The fugitive moments, days, weeks, months and years,
And the procession of eternities—
I doom thee. Though afar, the King we serve
Hears, heeds me, and sends—death.

Oneret (*coming forward*). Say not *thou* so.

Irë. Plead not where destiny admits no plea—
My pang's more sharp than thine in dooming her.
I sin to feel it. [*To Zalonia.*
Whencefore standst thou there?
Thou art a beautiful horror,—but we scorn
Its fascination. Call the nobles in,
Who visit us from Thebes. Go, instantly.
Ye strangely loiter. So——
Authority
Begins to limp, and would decrepid grow,
If faithlessness like her's scaped mortal censure,
Whose heart it rive soever.

Oneret. Hear me, pontiff;

Me, who have heard thee with a childish faith,
And shaped my conduct to thy angel lessons,
Within the porch the truest worshipper.

Irë. Pleading for her, thou sharest her heresy.

Oneret (*aside*). There is no safety, then, but flight for me.

(*Aloud*) Yet hear me. From her infancy I've known her,
Even when she was a little reveller
Among the buttercups, and drank their dew
For wine ;—then when, a visionary girl,
She sought, urged by an instinct like a passion,
All lonely places, haunting them like wonder ;
During her absence, they were wont to wait her ;
Whence till she trod its forest avenues,
A visitant to its mysterious powers,
Great expectation hushed the wilderness.
—If I offend ; sure, these may challenge grace.

Irë. The grace you challenge is the selfsame presence
You have affronted rashly. Louring wrath
Broods on its brow, a tempest.

Oneret. Reason ! Nature !

Irë. Think you, *I* know them not—*I* feel them not?
Now, by their mighty agonies within me,
Put curb on that proud lip ; else nor thy own,
No, nor the dignity of her thou servest,
By imputation of thy innocence,

Will warrant safety. Excommunicate
Art thou for what thou hast but said. Begone!
Beneath this sacred roof one moment tarry,
The hovering death will smite thee.

Oneret. Feet, be wings. [*Rushes out.*

Irë. Why should the author of the mischief dare us?
These walls do sweat from out their living pores,
And loathe the tolerated schismatic
Who lurks within them,—silent,—shielded, where
Respect for power restrains the mighty curse,
Which else, like to a blast from some sea-cave,
Breathed through my trembling lips from my rent soul,
Should sweep him hence, in whirling ruin rapt,
Beyond the confines of the peopled earth.

DIO *and* ATTENDANTS.

Adone (*aside*). I cannot breathe. My husband's glance is on me.
Lumon, be mute. I must myself be prudent.
(*To Adon*) The Theban nobles. Irë sees them not.

Adon. Yes—but he doth.

Irë. Thou Dio, Prince of Thebes,
Whose coming was so welcomed, we must send thee
Barren away. The priestess Thebes expects
To bear chaste witness in her hundred gates,
Stands there attainted. What sayst thou to her?

Dio. Is it indeed so?

Irë. It is so indeed.

Dio. Much will the great king grieve on hearing this:

But to her doom I leave her.

Irë. So must all—

Mona and Rea only stay with her.

[*All quit the Temple processionally, except Zalonia, Mona and Rea.*

Zalonia. Between you standing thus, accursed of both,

As needs I must be; in my martyr heart

Love lights a fire, and I consume therein.

So—look ye on, and triumph while I perish.

Rea. We pity, for thou canst not shun the power

That rules us from afar. From *distant* Thebes

Thy sentence, spoken *here*, sped instantly;

And the swift angel, charged with thy destruction,

Stands o'er thee now.

Zalonia. O, were he visible,

That I might see if Irë's form he take,

And kill me with a kiss.

Mona. Thrice impious passion

Could find no meaner object. Not alone

Polluting thine, but his high office too.

To look on him with fleshly eyes, whose spirit

With spirit but converses

Zalonia (*aside*). I have comfort,
A mighty satisfaction in his love,
Might not from passion's instinct be concealed.
But I do feel the coming apathy—
Do I drink poison from their baleful eyes?
(*Aloud*) Sisters, support me. Sudden mystery!
O, Irë, is this death? Some power unseen
Slays me at once.

Rea. The blood forsakes thy cheek——

Zalonia. It quits my heart! Uphold me. Where are ye?
Ye are gone. I feel ye not. Ye let me sink.
A strange desire invests me. I yearn to probe
The curious infelicity of pain.
Why is't it loathes the less and loves the more,
Even though it perish in its plentitude,
Or live in sheer insensibility?
Darkness and emptiness and formlessness,
All feeling merged in everlasting death!
I trow, there be dead hearts. Would mine were so!
Grave's dust is on me. Error, like a worm,
Stifles my soul. It chokes me—strangles me.
Fray off the slimy reptile from my flesh—
Unbind my eyes that I may help myself.
Hold me not down. I faint—I die--I die!

II.

The Schism.

Scene—Gardens of the Temple.

Lori.

BEHOLD the scene is changed. See, here,
The gardens of the temple fair,
Wood, water, hill, and vale and lawn,
As by an artist's pencil drawn;
And in the distance there remote
The temple's self in ether float!
On lofty terrace elevate,
A hundred steps lead to its gate.

[*Lori seats himself on a step.*

Lumon *enters.*

Lumon. Truth! man might question thy almightiness,
So poor in means that thy commissioned teacher
Must wind his way, like a conspirator,
Into the seat of power. That tyrant's bidding
Even death obeys. Nay, force they back by fraud,
And tread what paths they will to falsehood's end.
—If so, for good might evil not be used?
Thou, Adon, fear for thy vice-royalty:
Unborrowed pomp may rule in place of thine.

The people love my lore, and would enthrone me,
Could I but shape the track.. Psha, celibacy—
If he with superstition side in this,
Why wedded he? A prince, forsooth; not priest.
Princes have license: so some priests I wot of.
The Princess mocks his inconsistency.
—He likes me well; rather, my eloquence:
Not what, but how, I speak; the manner pleases.
My tenets charm not, spoke by her; as it
Might outrage marital chastity, to prove
Love and religion could be reconciled;
Yet, spoke by Oneret, they charm again.
— There I suspect some wrong. If wrong it be,
And against her, 'twere done no less to me:
For love makes me her champion. Ha! hope dawns,
'Twere with the people reason for rebellion,
Which may divorce the ill-assorted pair;
When I——How now? 'Tis she.

Enter ADONE.

Alone (*apart and meditative*). My Oneret condemned and ta'en to flight;
Zalonia smitten—dead mysteriously;
And Iré, having fulmined all this sorrow,
Retired within a cloud, shut in his chamber,
Aping unseen divinity. Where's Lumon?
I bade him meet me here.

Lumon. Most gracious princess, I wait your pleasure.

Adone. Left you now the prince?

Lumon. I did, dejected beyond measure.

Adone. And, prithee, wherefore?

Lumon. Even for Oneret's flight.

Adone. Methinks, in that I have the greater occasion for melancholy.

Lumon. I too should thus have thought, but that, in strange grief, I surprised his highness so closeted with her contemplated image, as he were rapt withal.

Adone. Her image?

Lumon (*producing a miniature*). Yes;—this.

Adone. How came you by it?

Lumon. I begged it of him; since its presence so visibly increased his sorrow—nay, as it were bodily fed the same—its removal was a kindness. Of a surety, it is most livelily limned.

Adone. Too livelily! A secret treasure! I knew not that he cherished such a gift.

Lumon. What is in this to move you?

Adone. A false heart—a wandering fancy. Heavens, it is ever thus. They who preach the straitest morality practise the widest license.

Lumon. It were well your highness set some guard upon him.

Adone. Why should I, Oneret fled?

Lumon. Therein we shall best find the proof we seek. If his love be really as strong as his grief supposes, his pursuit, if not on the instant, yet soon as it can be decently decided, will assuredly be attempted.

Adone. He is lost, and I am poorer than the wild son of the forest, whose painted skin is all the wretch's wealth.

Lumon. You are premature in your desperation.

Adone. I loved him,—how I loved him! Earth herself
Loves not the Heaven more dearly, when, descending
Into her vernal lap, he pours the shower
That makes her blossom. Where once smiled the sun
Is now a gloomy void. Mere emptiness
My once full heart. Myself a nothing—nothing.

Lumon. I would do miracles to serve you.

Adone. What you will. Your wit may haply contrive, where my dullness would despair.

Lumon. I will keep such watch upon him, that, should he mean flight, my knowledge shall match the speed of his thinking.

Adone. The signs of change are less curious than itself. To seek its cause elsewhere than in its own nature, were the mere fondness of philosophy. Had I as much provoked, as I have laboured to please him, yet, had that been faithful, he had proved constant.

The mutation, moreover, is in the time; creeds have become unstedfast; neither are our manners to-day what they were yesterday: and love but follows belief in quest of novel adventure. Men are but as the age; and it is but orderly that while my mind trembles in the balance of opinion, *his* heart should waver in the object of its election. I must endure the pain. I pray thee, Lumon, do what thou sayest. Spare me further instruction. These starting tears are the enforcers of my abrupt departure.

Lumon (*alone*). How exquisitely when woman reasons, she interprets by her feelings what the logician would never solve by his syllogisms. Referring all to inner sentiment, she leaves nothing to occasional accident. If a special constancy in nature be needed for fidelity in love, the princess, forsooth, will not blame the prince, her lord, for not having what she finds wanting in herself. But neither is singular in this singularity, for there is an apologetic spirit abroad that infects every bosom with the like malady. For my part, the felt liberty of will permits not me to be deceived with a prevalent sophism. The prince!

ADON *enters.*

Adon. I sought thee, Lumon.

Lumon. I trust your highness is not angry.

Adon. An I were, my wrath had reason. I fear

your new truths—(for so I believe you dignify them in your nomination)—are great disseverers of affection. I hear of dissensions in many households. Parents and children dispute to the ruin of all reverence. Lovers and friends divide and separate. Husband and wife suffer mutual alienation.

Lumon. And charge you this on my teaching?

Adon. I have near evidence in support of the accusation. My own Adone reasons with me, even to tears. This very hour I met her overwhelmed with sorrow; and when I would have stayed her with questions, she passed me by with violence;—and, withal, she shot glances of indignation that might have withered me, had not my pride been as strong as her will.

Lumon. And this you charge on my teaching, too?

Adon. I do.

Lumon. May there not be other causes, pertaining if not principal? May not a husband's desires wander? May not a wife's perceptions lead to suspicions? And may not incipient jealousy betray itself in tears and frowns, and looks that would be lightnings?

Adon. You mean what lately you so offensively jested on—my presumed preference for the princess's handmaiden, the beautiful and well-natured Oneret, with the unquestionable ostent of my surprise and regret at her enforced departure. I vow to Heaven

that I am guiltless. Never have I, by word or deed, transgressed. My regard for her, which I frankly acknowledge, was never more than a half-conscious thought, a tremulous feeling.

Lumon. Ah! my prince! remember that yourself were even the single juror who convicted the all but immaculate Zalonia, upon this special count, that thoughts and deeds are equally criminal.

Adon. Thou art my conscience! I fear thee.

Lumon. Nay, fear thyself. Or, if thou wouldst not, dare to examine into thyself; and, that thou mayst effectually do it, retire into thy closet; be secluded for many days, nor come forth, until thou be'est satisfied that, by abstraction from all disturbing forces, thou hast purified thy will, and so determined its resolutions, that all future temptation may be safely defied.

Adon. This to me? Sir, fare thee well for the present. You may—you shall, hear further from me.

Lumon. He sought me angry, and has left me more so.

The shaft is in thy side. Go, wounded deer,
Where'er thou wilt, thou canst not fly from it.
Now, may the love of thy neglected wife
Seek a new home, and, by a holier tie
Than that of ceremony, link itself

To one as deeply true:—a loftier fate,
That owes to none beyond itself its state.

[*Lumon goes out.*

REA *and* EREMO *enter.*

LORI *comes forward and sings*

Lori. Fancy in the serpent's crest
(Never was so sweet a nest),
Creeps to sleep, and dream his best.

Rea. Your songs are sensual, Lori:—they displease.

[*Lori returns to his seat dejectedly.*

That singing-boy! and Irë doats on him;
Nay, censures all who doubt his poesies—
This Irë doth, the arch-prelate—doth he not?

Eremo. He doth, most sacred priestess. Yet, bethink thee,
How he hath nurtured him from infancy,
An orphan-child, left in the Temple's charge.

Rea. We must subdue such fondness. By our god,
I have a voice in this. Let Irë know,
Zalonia gone, I share with him his state,
And if his state, his power.

Eremo. He has left his chamber,
And roams this morn abroad.

Rea. A change of mood.
He's strangely passionate. Shall I lay down
My soul a sacrifice, and he permit

Free impulse whatsoever? Suddenly,
I am grown calm. Retire we;—I'd consult thee.

Eremo. Most willingly.

[*They remove to a more distant part of the gardens.*

ONERET, *disguised as a page, enters.*

Oneret. Now, in the likeness of a page disguised,
May excommunicated Oneret
Escape detection's eye, while lingering here
Among the haunts to which her soul is native.
I have possessed young Lori of my purpose,
And act by his advice. Now, by dear love,
Strange rumours meet my ear. If half be true,
Him may we help whose cruel zeal we rue.

IRË *and* SURIAL *enter.*

Irë. Appoint a special service in the temple.
—Whom have we here?

Oneret. A poor youth, sir.

Irë. What wouldst?

Oneret. Find refuge from my nature's wilfulness,
And never more have reason to protest
That aught I would. The world once left behind,
Who would return to one proved so unkind?

Irë. What coward sin has scourged thee to this place?

Oneret. No sin—but hate of sin, and love of goodness.

Irë. Such hate is love. Such love, the love of love.
—How shew it here?

Oneret. By my docility.

Irë. Of whom wouldst learn?

Oneret. Of thee.

Irë. Wherefore of me?

Oneret. Thy holy aspect fascinates my soul.

Irë. What service seekest? Thou art yet unlearned.

Oneret. The humblest service. To be doorkeeper
In Heaven's fair mansion satisfies my hope.

Irë. A modest wish, lad. Go, good Surial;
Appoint a special service, as I said.

[*Surial goes up to Rea and Eremo.*

Youth, seek me after it.

Oneret. Most gratefully.

Irë (*apart*). Nought else will purify my soul but death.
These be the waters I must swim with her.

Return EREMO *and* SURIAL.

How now, Eremo?

Eremo. The arch priestess——

Irë. Ha!
Zalonia?

Eremo. Rea, so please your sanctity,
Thus charged me.

Irë. I had forgotten. Well. Her charge?

Eremo. Much need she hath of preparation, ere
She rush into the presence; wanting she
In her precessor's negligent presumption.

Irë. That want 's not special. Wherefore urge it now?
She gave up that when she gave up her soul,
With all its other feelings.

Eremo. That surrender
Brought her the priesthood; then Zalonia's fault
The prelacy. She shares its power with thee.

[*Leaves Irë abruptly.*

Irë. A woman, though a priestess, then rules best
When most submissive. Poor Zalonia!
That was in thee the crowning loveliness.
—What, gone?—Did he design irreverence?
Would he offend me? I've offended heaven,
And must accept this penance. Let him go,
Till this great inward struggle be appeased,
I am debarred the altar. No. All is well
The man returns.

EREMO, *having consulted with* REA, *comes down again.*

Your message, sir?

Eremo. 'Tis this—
She'll seek the aid of prophecy, and hence
Refers the difference 'twixt herself and thee
To Mona's oracle.

Irë. What difference?

Oneret. She would usurp upon the Pontiff's power.
And lead the way by schism.

Eremo. Whose page is this?
Young varlet, peace! [*Returns to Ren.*

Irë. I thought thou wert less learned;—
Thou knowst more than appears.

Oneret (*aside*). Else had thy doctrine
Fallen on a barren nature. (*Aloud*) Sir, your pleasure?

Irë (*apart*). O, power is power no longer, when the spring
'Twould move, not instant answers to the touch.
—A great affliction bows my courage down.
'Tis not their taunts, but what I feel within.
—Where's Lori? (*To Oneret*) To his care I'd give thee, youth.
He is a singing boy of our great temple,
Sincere of soul as musical of speech.
I love him well; and, since I find thee apt,
Will place thee as his pupil. Stay awhile;
I see him coming. Hither, Lori! Thou
Art slow of step to day.

LORI *coming again forward.*

Lori. Your choir boy's like
To be supplanted, master.

Irë. No. My heart
Has room for both.

Lori. For me, and—her?

Irë (*aside*). For *her?*

Nay, was he not e'er with us? (*Aloud*) Did you note it?

Her buried name let silence sanctify.

'Tis *he* (*pointing to Oneret*), child, shares this bosom with thee now.

Youth, what's thy name?

Oneret. Juva.

Lori (*to Oneret*). As well that as any. I know not if *he* or *she*, the appellation being foreign But what imports it? We will neutralize the difficulty, and prenominate thee *it.* Ever we so name the babe, indifferent to the sex. Be thou a babe in innocence we shall need no interpreter. See, Juva, if that be thy name, there is my hand, and a kiss too. Neither of us, I warrant, will misunderstand the other, denominate us as they will. Only one in the world besides, indeed, loves mortal as I do thee.

Irë. But one in the world, my child?

Lori. Not even one. For he whom I mistaking meant, must now look into his heart for the immortal, whereof the mortal is no longer visible to his material eye. Yet dares he as little own his love for that as for this.

Irë. Such prattle, child, will cause me to disown thee. Fearest thou not?

Lori. Why should I? Love is a possession that,

though not owned, may not be disowned. You may be silent, but you may not deny.

Irë. Wormwood!

Lori. Philosophy, you mean. Shall I sweeten it with the honey of song?

Irë. Ay, what thou list.

Lori (*sings*).

In the forest, far away,
Fancy met, upon a day,
Earth's fair spirit out for play.
Fancy then was young, I ween,
Earth herself was vernal green:
But when they were older grown,
Both had work: . . each worked alone.

Irë. Thy fancy is still idle.

Lori. It may be; . . but its dalliance with the fair earth is not the less prohibited. She is far too busy. Ah, me! I have no playfellow.

Irë. Juva comes, with a wish to supply thy want.

Lori (*to Oneret*). Tell the sage Irë, that our play together is even heart-earnest work. Say that the season of sport is over with us for ever. It is so with those who love as we do.

Irë. I shall never smile more, or there is no wit in thy proverbs.

Lori. I cannot speak: I'll sing. I have no wit in my words, but there is truth in my numbers.

(*Sings*) Each dusty grain
A world may contain;
And each world within
Another may spin:
And inner and inner,
And thinner and thinner,
Orbs less and still less
Life and mind may express—
Life within life, truth within truth,
Heart within heart. Such is youth.

Irë. Sure, child, thou'dst teach me mysteries.

Lori. I would, master, thou hadst taught me thine.

Oneret (*to Irë*). Methinks, he hath already learned too much.

Lori. Then is that too much less than nothing. And it well may be so; for are we not told, in the greatest mystery, that this same nothing is all—this all is love?

Irë. The holiness of love, since it is ineffable, should be solemnized by silence. Peace, child, peace.

Lori. Why should love be buried in thy heart, because the beloved is buried in her grave? Death both purifies and immortalizes love. Being spirit, worship her in spirit. Sing hymns to her divinity.

Irë. Now, indeed, my child, hast thou gathered honey strong enough to sweeten this cup of bitter wine. Put death into the chalice, and I will drain it with

a thirst that would exhaust an ocean, had it that capacity.

Lori. And hither at length comes Rea, who were like, her authority permitted, to make both of us taste even such draught. I rede thee to rate highly her condescension.

[REA *and* EREMO *return.* REA *dismisses* EREMO. *He enters the temple, and then reappears with a number of priests, and draws them up in array upon the steps of the Temple. This done,* REA *advances towards* IRË. EREMO *goes back into the Temple.*

Irë. Fair greeting, priestess. Have I speech with thee?—

Thanks for these equal terms, though late vouchsafed,
Since it is granted, thou resume thy mind;
Paint me its picture in the best of words,
That I may wear the portrait in my soul.

Lori. Thanks, my good master. Thy pupil now shall have fair liberty of mood and range of fancy. Since thou hast left the clouds, the day shines forth again. Not the sun is surer victor when his arrows of light shoot from the arch of noon.

Rea. Nay, hear me, priestly Irë:—then, be just.

An equal prelacy of either sex
By none may be more willingly acknowledged

Than by myself. But what I yield, I claim.
Hast thou an ear for music, and I none,
Must I be bound to listen? If that boy
Sing songs to please thee, must they needs please me?
To me offensive, vain and frivolous,
They suit not our devotion's ordonnance.
Permitted, not prescribed; henceforth, forbid them. . .
The hymns that, howsoever purposed well,
Have failed in pleasing both.

Lori (*aside*). She'll not take food,
And therefore starve we must.

Irë. Call you this justice?

Rea. Is it not? Hereby,
Removing what to me is an offence,
Both may subsist in peace.

Lori (*aside*). Here, truly, we
A nothing more than something made may see.

Irë. Peace! and offence!—Removal of offence!—
You would not see; . . . must I pluck out my eyes!
Ask me, displant these trees, for they are lovely,
And you would not behold the beautiful.
Must I then do it? Or, pull your temple down;
Must I then do it? Or, if I could, extinguish
Sun, moon and stars, and whatsoever makes
Creation so ornate? Ask of our god,
If this he'd do? I marvel how *he'd* answer.

Lori (*aside*). Mona will answer for him.

Irë. Most wise priestess,
Whence came such wisdom to thee?
Rea. Not from thee,
Whose wonder is my triumph. I'll ask our god,
If Irë shall dissolve his sensual soul
In song that makes a river of the heart,
Duty would find an everlasting rock?
Zalonia's fate, methinks, should warn us both.
'Twas Lori's holy hymns her nature melted
To that same love which wedded her to death.
—Thou art no god, that what thy fiat rules
There's none should disavow.
Irë. Thou art a fiend,
Whose mission is to blast what angels made,
So all be barren as thy soul.
Rea. I have
Appealed to Mona.
Irë. Be it so.

Re-enter EREMO.

O, here 's
Thy witness that thou seekest the oracle
Which shall decide this question. Sir, you're welcome.
Hypocrisy! I'll pluck thy visor off,
And shew thy hideous features to the world,
That all shall loathe the monster.
Eremo. Be not rash.

Irë (to Rea). For thy rank soul, thou painted charnel-house,
Its stench shall shock the nations. Love immortal!
I who late scorned thee in Zalonia's form,
Now justly prove the agonies of death,
In the quick flesh that makes the terror live,
A burning ecstasy of breathing horror.
O, angel death, take but her shape once more
And I will kiss the poison on her lip,
And follow where she went.

Eremo. There is more in this
Than I can comprehend.

Irë. Earth—Heaven—Hell!
More by all these, if thou couldst measure them,
Though they were infinite.
To the great Father,
Whose love eternal gave them life and lustre,
Hear my appeal.
Author beneficent
Of all we see and are, whose creant passion
Throbs in this heart; beneath its mighty impulse
I soften like a child. There stands my foe.
O, pardon her, dear father of the world;
And give ere long her heart to know what mine
Now feelingly has come to understand—
That love is thy sole image. Through her veins
Let the delicious inspiration tremble,

And consecrate each separate artery
With a particular rapture. Let this be,
That she may learn the excellence she scorns,
And, superstition's chrysalis cast off,
Grow into goodness. Rea, I have blessed thee.

[*Irë goes up towards the temple, and while endeavouring to enter is stopped by the assembled priests.*

Eremo. Now, by the all-worshipt serpent, spake in him
Some revelation; for he looked inspired.

Rea. Wait till such vision opens in thy soul,
As long has waked in mine, for the reward
Of self-abandoning austerity.

Irë (*returning*). They tell me, that by orders had from thee,
They bar me from the temple. Is it so?
Thou dost exceed authority in this,
As my co-equal, not superior——
Yet I forbear because I have been wroth;
And this my patience shall be penitence.
Nay, I'll submit a third shall judge between us,
From the same motive, which now governs me.
My voice of Mona made a prophetess,
And thou appealest to her. Far in the forest
She hath her hermitage. I'll seek her cell;
Thither I journey. See, you follow soon.

May truth inspire the oracle she utters;
Prepare you for the sentence. See to that.

[*Leaves the scene.*

Oneret. Go we with him, dear Lori? Shall we not?

Lori. To the world's end I follow him and thee;
Scarce knowing which I love the best of ye.

Rea (*to Eremo*). Would Mona had not, in her frantic mood,
Chosen the wilderness' deep solitude.
—But thither must we follow;—you precede;
And I will after with determined speed.

[*Depart at different sides.*

Re-enter IRË *and* ONERET, *afterwards* LORI.

Irë. It is well bethought. We should not profane by haste what ought to be performed with dignity. (*To Oneret*) I knew not, in sooth, I should so soon need your service, my pert page. What you have observed you have most clearly understood. If your diligence keep pace with your intelligence I am well-bested. Go to the palace and advise the princess, fair Adone, of our immediate exody. Say to her so much as you have perceived—no more.

Oneret. I will observe your bidding with most righteous strictness, and a celerity that shall witness for my zeal. Prelate, farewell. [*Exit.*

Irë. An earnest youth.

Lori. Must the swift, of need, win the race?

Irë. No, child.

Lori. No—nor the strong always conquer in the strife?

Irë. Neither.

Lori. Then it may be *hoped* that the punished are not always the guilty. Yet this is what those who doomed them must needs *fear*—more especially if the punished be killed; for then the killing would prove to have been murther. Would it not?

Irë. It would, child, indeed.

Lori. And what if the doomer himself were a criminal in the cause?

Irë. Ay, child. That must be thought of, too.

Lori. What must be thought of, master?

Irë. Love condescends from god to man, from man to woman. No woman ever loved who was not first beloved.

Lori. Zalonia said often that it was woman who really made the election, though, in his conceit, man arrogated the privilege.

Irë. Thus—even thus, would she pour balm into the wounds of my conscience. There is but one way,—to live no longer!

Lori. Yes, there exists another.

Irë. What other?

Lori. To live *on.* Nay, nay, master; wait, in patience, for what may yet happen. Her death, now, sudden and mysterious, so stirs my fancy that it suggests unlimited possibility to prophetic expectation.

Irë. Hope! hope! I will shriek it aloud, like the wild eagle to the sea and sky. Ay, my dear child, it is wise in thee to utter what in me it were madness to conceive. Come—come. Have with thee thy harpet. Thou hast it? That is well. As we journey, thou shalt solace me with thy sweetest numbers. There—see Surial has caparisoned our steeds already. Thine is a palfrey that prettily befits thy stature. Should death overtake one of us on the road, that one will be the happier of the twain!

III.

The Oracle.

Scene—A Corridor in Prince Adon's *Palace.*

Lori.

A CORRIDOR, with arches wide,
And soaring lofty in their pride;
And sculptured with such taste and skill,
Such prodigality of will,
As even the dullest must convince
It is the palace of a prince.
Murmurs of the crowd without—
Curse and wail, and shriek and shout! [*Retires.*

[*Noise of popular tumult.*

Lumon *and* Sirani *meeting.*

Lumon. Still the noise continues. Hail! Is it Sirani?

Sirani. The same.

Lumon. Hast seen the Princess?

Sirani. I have.

Lumon. What news?

Sirani. Only this. Mona, the prophetess, has sent impatient word that she doth even purpose an instant visitation to her highness, moved thereto by a special inspiration.

Lumon. So—so. At such a time!

Sirani. Please you, dismiss me. I must wait upon Adone.

Lumon. Go, sir, by all means. [*Sirani departs.*
Well gone. The time's arrived. Ha! it compels
Hither her lord. So good. For him have I
Already soothed to right compliant mood.
Adon, my lord!—this way.

ADON *enters.*

Thou best of princes!
That thy celestial virtues should have failed
To win the affections of the wayward people,
Repeats a story never obsolete.
—Thy well-advised retirement, for the righting
Of some erroneous thoughts, they have misconstrued
As proud exclusiveness, neglect alike
Both of thy queen and them. This couple they
With the old tyranny, which now opinion
Spurns at, grown angry with the zeal that lets it.
You hear the tumult. They've unstoned the streets,
The houses have unfurnished, overturned
The vehicles that bore the richer sort,
And whatsoever they could seize upon
Have made a pile of, barring thoroughfare,
Defiant of the troops.

Adon. Is it a riot?

Lumon. More.

Adon. A revolt?

Lumon. More still. Be not deceived—
'Tis revolution.

Adon. Is there hope?

Lumon. None, save
In flight.

Adon. And how.

Lumon (*opening a panel*). Here, sir, 's a secret way,
I found by chance. A passage underground
Leads to a chamber, where my provident care
Has grouped some friends of yours, charged with the means
For your subsistence, and *compelled disguise.*
Waste you no words in thanks: but go.

[*Adon obeys.*

He is gone.

[*Closing the panel.*

ADONE *and* Attendants *enter.*

Adone. The prince! Where is the prince? Was he not here?

Lumon. Even so.

Adone. Where now? The peril thickens. Will he
Not guard his wife—his queen?

Lumon. Impossible.
The prince has fled.

Adone. O, selfish care;—nor thought
On me! Methinks, the tumult's lulled.
Lumon. Behold
The cause.

MONA *enters, attended with* Deacons *of both sexes.*

Adone. Thanks, Mona.
Mona. Thank not me; but that
Oracular spirit which commanded me
Thus to come forth. My presence here has been
Far more than armies. The desert prophetess,
Clad, in the eyes of faith, with robes of power,
Appeared; and crouching fury, spaniel-like,
Licked her adorèd feet. I lead thee thus,
[*Taking Adone by the hand.*
To sanctuary.
Lumon (*aside*). Fickle herd! (*Aloud*) O, pardon me;
My way is eastward. I would see the streets
Cleared of the crowd.
Adone. 'Twill be a service.
Mona. Go. [*Lumon goes.*
That heretic, fair princess—Soft, who stays us?

ONERET *enters, disguised as* JUVA, *struggling with* EREMO.

Adone. Why thus enforce him forward? Is this part

Of the street-quarrel? If it be, submit,
As those without, to the dread hermitess,
Armed with the prophet-spell.

Oneret. Great princess, listen—
We both are from the Temple: I from Irë,
The lawful prelate; he from her, from Rea,
The usurping schismatic. It chanced, we met:
He picked a quarrel with me on the point
Of precedence. The orthodox Rea had,
It seems, already, in his thought, dethroned
The unopposing Irë. But not so—
For Irë sent me, princess, to acquaint thee
He had set forth upon a pilgrimage
To Mona's oracle. But Mona's self,
I see, is here;—not in her desert cave.

Adone. Thou'st said. Speak thou.

Eremo. In Mona's train I came.

Mona. With my authority I shield the man.
He sought my cell, a deacon of the temple,
Held in high estimation by myself
And Rea—an undoubted friend to truth,
An unsuspected, guileless celibate.
Yon youth I know for one mistaught of Lori,
The root of contest in this hapless strife,
Which must be quenched. War in the State admits
No question in the Church. Behoves it hence,
Juva—for so they call the upstart youth—

Should suffer bonds. Here, deacons, bind him fast,
Nor set him free, until I give the word.

Oneret. Wherein have I transgressed? Let me with speed
Follow forth Irë, and remand his steps.

Mona. Thou art daintily equipped for forest travel.

Oneret. Scorn! Now, I know thee. Farewell, childhood's faith!
No oracle but echoes to thy heart;
If that speak not, the agèd world is dumb.
A prophetess! Irë shall know thy falsehood.
Infant surprise, with glance upturned, regards
The household fly as 'twere a wingèd spirit,
But older eyes perceive the wonder common.

Mona. Take him away. [*Oneret is led out.*] What admiration's this,
Fair princess? Lean on me. I shall be found
Equal to every trial. Fear not thou.

Scene changes.

IRË *and* SURIAL, *followed by* LORI.

Lori. The temple gardens once again,
With hill and water, wood and plain.

Irë. Gone from her desert cave! Who said he could
Interpret well the reason?

Surial. It was I.
The spirit moved Mona to forsake her cell,
And haste to Uxmal;—whereunto she came
In time to stem the waves of revolution.

Irë. Indeed—indeed. If truth thus shows in her,
'Tis Heaven has hither sent the oracle
I went to seek. My soul is satisfied.

Lori. But who comes here?—My pupil under guard?

Irë. What, Juva?

Re-enter ONERET, *guarded.*

Wherefore is this? Unbind him——

Oneret. Nay, let my arms remain thus corded, since
Tis Mona's bidding. Her all-seeing eye
No guilt was so occult might e'er evade.

Irë. What guilt?

Oneret. A two-fold guilt.

Irë. Two-fold! What guilt?

Oneret. That I was Lori's pupil, and your missive.

Irë. She has decided then. Nor lack her words
Proper credentials in the miracle
Late done upon the riotous multitude.
O, power divine! that even with far-off look
Has gazed my heart to ashes.

Oneret. Listen further.
Ere ye arrived, Eremo gained her cell.
His eye it was looked on you. *His*, the tongue

That gave her knowledge. Power divine none else.
Her cunning, prompt to action, did the rest.

Ire. Unbind him straight. By the god's name in me,
Not yet extinct, though smitten, I command you,
As ye would shun the deadly shaft of him
Whom flying ye pursue. Is he unbound?

[*They unbind Oneret.*

Ha! ha! I see ye know me for your pontiff.

Lori. Shoot not behind thee, master, but before:
They'll shun thy bow, like that of death—or love.
For note it well, dear master—note it well:
(*Sings*) Love and death are the names of one
Who else were nameless ever—
The shoulder of the hunter sun,
Sustains a ray-full quiver:—
Death and life one likewise be—
Both are one, O love! in thee.
And truth, dear master, is another word, with the same dear old meaning still.

Irë (*abstracted*). O what death here chokes me!
While love o'erfloods my heart! Truth, too, is passion;
And no mere form serene. Life's all! These hairs,
Agonized life! nerves, brain and soul! The temple—
There!—sacred calm is there!

[*Slowly goes into the temple.*

Oneret. Why speaks not Irë
With the old voice of his authority?

Lori. Thou shouldst be slain for being innocent;
'Tis now the only sin.
Oneret. A sin?
Lori. E'er since
Zalonia died. There's many a pretty thing
That I could teach thee. Flowers that fade in spring
Had wintery birth. He who would live anew,
Should die to ancient custom. Who'd love true,
Should die to all but one. Hell must be trod
By him who'd die to earth and rise a god.
Oneret. Shrewd teaching, this;—by whom was't taught to thee?
Lori. Who taught me?—why, a snowdrop on its death bed,
One morn, last April twelvemonth.

Re-enter IRË, *with* ADONE *and* SIRANI.

Irë. Where is Mona?
She should be with thee, . . . was. She shuns me—Heavens!
Am I a thing accursed? Constraint is on thee,
Or thou wouldst freely answer.
Adone. To her power
The people bow. Her prophet mantle guards
My person's safety. Other hope is none,
Seeing my lord has fled.
Irë. Then here stand I,
Primate of Uxmal! Let herself, then, answer—

The prophet's spirit subject to the prophet,
Herself my subject, subject is to me.

Adone. You are not, then, apostate from the faith?

Irë. Behold me. Faithful to the faith of ages,
My spirit, in an attitude erect,
Became the channel of the lightning's current,
That spared the shrine, but smote the worshiper.
I hold the keys of life and death!

Adone. What yet?
The people shunned tradition. Lumon ruled
With his new truths. Men read thy secret heart
And pitied its deep woe.

Irë. My heart!—My heart
Is dead! Away!—Till breathed upon anew,
It hath no resurrection. Know, my heart
Is buried in a gorgeous pyramid,
And sleeps a charmèd sleep. Not so my soul!
Awake, it will be heard in all its power.
Let Mona tremble; and beware, in time.
Body and soul she yielded;—would remand.
Would she? For her own sake, I curb her will.
At once, prove she obedient, else she dies!

Adonè. Look, where she comes.

Enter MONA, *attended.*

Irë. Well come. Hail, prophetess!

Mona. Hail, sovran pontiff! be thy blessing on me.

Ire. Be blessèd. But we sought thy oracle,
Nor knew ourself thus honoured. We had told thee
What now thou knowst; how Rea, bent on schism,
Had aimed at our authority. In mercy,
We spared her usurpation, and, in wisdom,
Referred the cause to your decision. Well!

Mona. Well? 'Tis a little thing that she requires—
That Lori's songs profane our shrine no more.

Irë. A little thing!

Mona. Come, you discern not what
Is patent to the general eye and ear.
The songs of love find echoes in your bosom;
They come to you like voices from an urn;
Speaking, in music, of a paradise
Attained by happy spirits. From Lori's shell,
Issue such murmurs as from ocean's own,
Telling of distant waves that shaped it once.

Irë. Sweet music!—heavenly murmurs!

Mona. Hear them not—
Be deaf as are the dead.

Irë. When you are dumb!—
Not hear them, Mona? Why, they fill the world,
And make our being but a replication
To the full orbèd universe, still moving
In the high state of harmony, on—on!
Not hear them? Hear them ye! And, in the sounds,
Seek and find joy eternal.

Surial. Can it be?

Irë. Time and destruction leave to their own work.
Be ours to renovate the frame of Nature,
And live in friendship; binding men to us,
So may they love the heavens that love the earth,
And make their bridal happy.

Mona. Heavens and earth!
You'd have us share in your apostacy.

Irë. Apostacy? Nay, I will not be wroth—
Not even a loving anger—lest I crush
What I would cherish in the cherishing.
To the completeness of thy mental power,
Which I have ever noted, I will trust,
That truth and love in their integrity
Will all unveil to thee, when comes the season
Appointed by themselves.

Mona. I may not hear thee.

EREMO (*from the Temple*) *enters.*

What now?

Eremo. Rea, the priestess has returned.

Irë. Eremo, you have wronged me. Ne'ertheless,
Take this in sign of pardon. Here's my hand.
A hearty clasp. A very hearty clasp—
A wondrous hearty clasp. Why, man, thy hand
Scarce presses on my palm. A lifeless hand,
With neither pulse nor feeling.

Eremo. Sir, what would you?

Irë. Why, this. A hand with a friend's soul in it;
Which here I find not. But enough of this,
Since here comes Rea, the arch-prelatess.

REA, *attended, enters.*

Irë. Angel of love! if thou the parent art
Of virtuous sentiment and generous thought,
Visit this haughty spirit; soften it,
Like wax in thy great heat, impressing so
Thy glorious image on its fluid mould!
—Now, Mona, speak to her.

Rea. As you have taught her?
Suborner of the oracle, 'twould seem,
Should judge between us!

Irë. Evil thinkers draw
Upon themselves the evil they suspect.
(*To Eremo*) Was't you were the suborner?

Eremo. In the cause
Of ancient faith, no stratagem should shame
The true believer.

Irë. Not with shame, but pride,
You triumph in your fault.

Mona. Fault? In your judgment,
Convention is the error of the past.
While Lumon prompts rebellion in our streets,
You yield to doubt beside the fane;—and all

Hastens to ruin. 'Tis but a choir-boy silenced,
And all is right again.

Irë. What! quench the spark
Of poet inspiration, thus, as 'twere,
With despot foot? Come hither, child. What, Lori,
Put out the light that in thy spirit shines,
And kindles up thy aspect like a god's,
Until I dream of thy divinity?
For all thy sweetness turn oppressor to thee,
And make thee sweeter by thy sufferance!
O, they are scant of policy, methinks,
And fain would have thee worshipt.

Rea. Would you mock us?

Irë. You'd have my soul uncurtained? You shall have it.
Through the rent hangings, look into its holiest!
There is no image seen, no idol worship —
The adorable therein is felt alone,
And only felt by me. The dead are absent,
Although immortal—present, not to sight,
But to the yearning soul. Pierce through the heart;
It veils its secret. Slay me and dissect me,
You shall find nothing.

Mona. Nothing? But that nothing
Is still Zalonia's spirit. That same nothing
Is an infinitude, that still inspires
With an eternal longing your desires.
I've spoken, now; I've been oracular!

Irë. Then, be it so.

Mona. If that thy curse invoked Zalonia's death,
Now, peal it forth, to summon down thy own ;
For thou like her hast sinned. 'Tis love, not duty,
Absorbs thy traitor heart.

Irë. Not traitor. No !
By the Eternal, no ! No traitor heart,-
No rebel heart ;—a martyr's 'tis, I strike :

Rea. Duty should conquer love.

Irë. Not conquer love,
But conquer passion. Never duty, yet,
Wrestled with love. Where but affection leads,
Then duty follows by a law divine.

Mona. You're mad, or else possessed by evil powers,
That aid in you the license of the times.
Spare thou thyself ; Zalonia's doom was murther.

Irë. My doom killed not, but it translated her.
This know I by the hope that fills my soul—
So may it be with me ! I loved Zalonia !
Let the spheres ring it out, and space resound it,
From world to world within the infinite !
Far in the wilderness where they have laid her,
Entempled in the pyramid. Ay, thither
These feet shall speed. Ye will not tell me where ;
But love should find her, though concealed in Hades.
Be sure, it shall ! By her sarcophagus,
I'll bow myself. I'll look upon her form—

I'll gaze upon her features, till they kindle
With the full life I'll throw into my eyes,
Draining my heart of all. What do these robes
Upon these scorching limbs? A little while,
I'll bear their torment;—but a little while,
For there I'll cast it off, this wretched yoke—
This sacerdotal lie—that would ice over
The river of quick life, and think it sport
To spurn its frozen surface. O, ye Heavens!
Be patient with me till this travail 's o'er—
Then set me free—I ask of ye no more! [*Rushes out.*

Rea. We'll to the temple.

Adone. To the palace, I.

Mona. And cleanse our thoughts from his impiety.

Scene changes.

Now for the Wilderness.—First view
A Lonely Forest Avenue.

ADON, *attired as an Indian Warrior.*

Adon. I have arrayed me in this savage garb—
My limbs half naked, and my head all bare—
To baffle my pursuers. Social feuds
Remand us back to nature, and throw man
Prone on his mother's bosom, earth's I mean,
And make him draw his nourishment from thence,
As in the civil infancy of states.

This haply is the moral of my fate,
Which tracing thus, I feel the more content.
—But, whist! I must to shelter. Lo, the skies
Grow lurid for a storm. I've watched it coming.
Silence has long since hushed the wilderness,
Expectant of the tempest. No dainty shower,
No gentle gale, pours here, or scatters balm:
But lightning, wide as the entire expanse,
Cleaves in the midst the o'erhanging firmament,
And flashes down a sulphurous cataract;
Then, thunder—such, men fear the skies may fall,
And crush them, peal on peal, as it rolls on—
Sieging the trembling vault incessantly;
While blow the winds from every point of air—
Tornadoes, hurricanoes, fierce monsoons.
—To shelter then, though with the frightened bear;
For in such seasons even the lion quails.

Scene changes.

Next, deep within the Desert hid.
The Interior of a Pyramid.

ZALONIA, *lying on a couch, watched by* XANA *and other* Maidens.

Xana. She'll soon awake. Death looks like sleep;—
this sleep,
Like death—sleep by that far-off power induced
Whose magic's boundless, mercifully used,

Since it this kind of resurrection grants
To the transgressing soul, whom it removes
Only from that which tempts. Wake up—wake up,
Fair marble saint! and live to light, to love.

SONG [*Music*].

Live to light, fair slumberer;
Life is but a world of sleep,
Where we dream we dreaming are,
Or awake to smile, to weep.

Zalonia (*waking*). Where, and how live I? Death-doomed, died I not?
Is this the life we die to?—the new birth?
Is this to be immortal? Yet these limbs!
Your's also, who are with me? Could I guess
So little difference 'twixt two kinds of life?
Deceive me not.

Xana. You live, and have not died.

Zalonia. Has Irë spared me, or the distant king?

Xana. That king spares always;—but removes, not kills.
Thou now art in the desert pyramid.
Here, take the scroll wherein thy story's writ,
And self-instructed, spare me needless speech.
[*Giving scroll.*

Zalonia (*having read it*). I have read all—and read in all, despair!

Parted from Irë, I am dead to hope—
For loveless hope is soulless; but a corse:
And hopeless love, a disembodied ghost,
Is a perpetual sigh, a lost desire.

Xana. Had he not thought thee dead, he had followed thee.

Well deemed the prince, that nothing but despair,
In Irë's heart, would blot thy image out—
A night so thick no star might pierce the gloom.

Zalonia. O, night, indeed! This darkness now is mine;—
Mine, his;—and both are wretched.

Xana. Out! alas!
The glory of the temple fades away,
The altar crumbles, and the god departs.

Zalonia. What new perplexity? My Irë wretched,
And yet the shrine subverted? He a martyr,
And yet his god dethroned? The book is closed,
If this be so, of man's great destiny!

Xana. Tradition died with thee—and Irë's power,
Spake its own doom with thine. He rules no more
Beside the serpent's fane.

Zalonia. O, love and fate!
Hath faith thus perished in your blended fires?

Xana. It hath—it hath.

Zalonia. His love first kindled mine.
The fire, thus lit on the domestic hearth,

Became a conflagration! What should cherish,
Why has it thus the potence to consume?
His heart slay mine, and slay religion's too!
O, doubtful gift! O, death that smiles like life!
O, hate that bears the semblance of sweet love!
Grave that appears a garden! False-faced grief
That wears joy's mask! Wherefore should poison hive
In such a seeming honey-cabinet—
Wherefore should hell thus look as it were heaven?

Xana. 'Tis rebel terror makes calamity.
Such panic sometimes strikes the meaner herds,
But ne'er should seize on reasonable man.
To distant ages shall the name be cursed
Of Irë, the Apostate!

Zalonia. Blind of soul!
Thou seeëst not the glorious wreath, ordained
To make his brow look kingly. Now, 'tis weaving
By heavenly virgins, while reclining softly
On rainbow steps, that lead unto the throne
Where love sits smiling.

Xana. Speak you thus of him,
Whose sin hath wrecked us all?

Zalonia. What should I say
Of him that loves me, whom I love, but this?
His merits justify the excess of madness.
Though Irë stand upon the altar's ruin;

Upon the ruin of our hopes, our loves,
That altar first was built. The hearts it crushed,
Yet lived, lived in their agony, and heaved,
As with an earthquake, underneath the load.
A mountain from our bosom's is thrown off!
But where is Irë? Better I were dead
Than he thus absent. Irë, where art thou?
Comes he not hither, let me die again—
Let me drink of the draught that bringeth sleep,
The sleep none wakes from. Find me means of death,
Or, let me with an obstinate remorse,
Shut out the taste of food, until I grow
A monument within this monument;
So when they seek the chamber where I sit,
My rigid corse show like an effigy.

Xana. O, lady—lady.

Zalonia. Death, my bridegroom, bring,
Or bring me Irë.

Xana. Lady, leave this chamber.
That couch, those mutes, all make thee think of death,
Which is but as a dream.—
There's one within
Far better suited to thy state of grief.

Zalonia. Is Irë there?

Xana. Alas!

Zalonia. Thou pitiest me!
Get news of him, and I will go with thee.

IV.

The Wilderness.

Scene—A Rapid in the forest, see,
Pours down its torrents fearfully.
Upon its topmost edge appears,
A light canoe, and downward bears,
Shot like an arrow from a bow,
And safely finds itself below.

The canoe is directed by Oneret, *who, on its resting, leaps from it.*

Oneret.

AM in search of Irë. He escaped me.
Him from afar I saw take bark like this,
And dash that foaming terror heedless down.
O, the precipitation and the peril!
I followed him, thank heaven, with safety too.
Lori and Surial both were 'tendant on him:
This gives me hope. Ho, there! I see a form.

Enter Surial.

What! Surial?—Where is Irë?

Surial. Wild with passion,
He plunged into the darkest of the woods,
As in their depths he best might shout it forth.

His heart is wild, and seeks the wildest spots
From sympathy. 'Twas wonderful to hear
How he communed with nature in the forest;
What mysteries he spake, as if to spirits.
None might, save Lori, speak to him. The boy,
From infancy, has learned his thoughtful habit,
And apprehends him with strange aptitude.
Stand back. They re-appear. They come this way.

IRĒ *and* LORI *enter.*

Irë. A deeper solitude, ye lonely wilds!
A darker horror, O, ye frowning woods!
Ye cannot be more lonely than my soul—
More awful than the heart deprived of heaven—
Left in a labyrinth of doubts and fears.
Come, night, thyself! Come, silence, such as was
Ere the great fiat! Let me be the sign
Of deprivation only; nor feel aught
That is, till new create.

Lori. By night and silence,
This indigence we suffer is enough;
We starve, unless we hunt. Learn this from love:
He sends his shaft right through the bleeding heart.
I dreamed last night that he had thus pierced yours,
When straight the arrow he had sped enflamed it,
And, while 'twas burning, from thy heart he plucked,
And gave it to Zalonia; who, in fear,

Took it for food—and ate it. Whereupon,
Love wept and vanished.

[*Surial and Oneret consult apart; Surial goes out.*

Irë. Thunder down for ever,
Ye mighty waters! O, thou shuddering air,
Confess love's essence in their thrilling impulse!
For suddenly he cometh. Yet, ye live—
Can feel the living touch: ye are full of life.
That ye have life—she none: O, oh, the pity!
That ye should love—she not; O, passing wonder!
Ye are not like Zalonia, motionless.
—So fair, so gentle, and so young to perish!
Insensible to speech, to loving pressure,
Continue still your flowing ecstasy.
I may not stop the action of your loves,
For consecrated walls have been my prison,
And I am alien to you. Nature, tremble!
Death is among thy forests: I am he—
A stranger to the life that here breathes freely.
Open thy arms and take me to thy bosom,
As thou hast taken her. O, deserts cruel,
That hide Zalonia's tomb from eyes like these,
Weeping their separation. Ever saw ye
Such gushing founts of sorrow? Be ye patient,
And by your pity my huge grief be hallowed!

Lori (*aside*). Men hide their poverty from very shame:

Wear face of joy, yet waste away at heart.
(*Aloud*) Death merits all reproach, but none the desert.

SURIAL *returns and talks with* ONERET.

Ah, me! dear master! (*Sings.*)

Foe to pity, death too stern,
Misery's sire, sin's dark god;
Hide thy wrongs in desert dern,
Lest thy sceptre prove a rod;
And the lover, like a child,
Put the pedant churl to shame;
And the changèd world, grown mild,
Say, O, death! thou art to blame.

Long since poor love put pilgrim habit on,
And wept for his subverted sovranty.

Oneret (*apart*). Even such a place.

Surial. Even such.

Oneret. It shall do well.

Irë. My eyes no more shall look upon the lovely:
Thus downcast, shall avoid the sight of woman.

Oneret (*coming forward*). Well stead me, then, my masculine attire!—
Who's there?

Lori. Two pilgrims, known to you by name,
Not nature. Better known than one of you
To one of us.

Oneret (*to Irë*). Sir—sir! The night comes on:

We must to refuge from the creatures wild,
That prowl in darkness. We have looked on things
That only made the day more beautiful.
Dense shubbery clothing the impending steeps,
With pine and peartree decked, and on the plains
The panther, antelope and buffalo,
Chasing each other in their frolic sport;
The prairie dog, or panting lazily,
With tongue outlolling, waiting the alarm,
Or else afoot, and swift in the pursuit
Of elk, or deer, or bird of gorgeous plume.
But now the snake and wolf the season claim,
Their hour of revel comes, and man their prey.
The evening star shines in the tumbling waters,
Reflected for our warning.

Irë. Let the stars
Shine softly on ravine and precipice,
Whiles I look on them. O, the sun at noon,
His perpendicular radiance darted down,
On my bare head, and heated so my brain,
That I was faint with fever. Let this cool
Fulfil its healing office. Now, the dead,
In twilight, may appear, and visit me;
My heart's wild hope, Zalonia yet may live,
Contenting thus. She lives immortally;
I feel her spirit haunts these forest glades—
She hath become their genius.

Oneret. Hath she so?
Then let me guide thee to a sort of nook
May be her special shrine: a cave so quaint,
A niche it seems within a chapel's walls,
Where we might place her statue. To my fancy
Yield thy sage judgment, Irë;—for in this,
'Tis certain love suggests.

Irë. A pensive sigh
I heard even now. Was't from my heart, or thine?
Or came it from the dell? Spake you of such?
Some bowery corner where phantasma wander,
And dreams take shape before unclosèd eyes.
I've no self-mastery now. My children, lead me.
Irë has been;—not is.

Lori. All will be well.
His fancy has in her's a counter-spell.

Scene changes.

A savage Cave within the Dell,
Mona's deserted Oracle.

ADONE, LUMON *and* EREMO.

Adone. Thanks, thanks, Eremo. This was Mona's cell.
Her hermit-home may sure our lodging be.
O, weary chase! Sir, go thou forth again,
And finding traces of the fugitives,

As heaven grant you may, haste back to us,
Ere darkness hinder possibility.

Eremo (*going*). I will.

Adone. The flight of Irë, and the Prince,
Leaves me no faith—no chart to guide me by.
Both sufferers from doctrines opposite,
And wrecked in the collision. Thou, thyself,
From the quelled people glad to hide awhile.

Lumon. Their disappointment they might wreak on me.

Adone. From these misshapen elements 'twere wise
To fashion some new use. Find we prince Adon,
I shape a saving project. If he deem,
The people are with thee, thy cause is his —
His, by adoption. Once the fact proclaimed,
They who seek Irë's life, must yield their own.
Irë's conversion would secure a triumph.
But see, Eremo ! There he beckons us.

[*Hastening out.*

Lumon (*alone*). What, loves she Adon still?—frames 'a device,
Would have him lead, me follow ! Nay, subject me
To Irë's rule ! Shall principles change hands,
And truth make champions of its enemies,
Pushing its earliest teachers to-aside?
Forbid it, gratitude !—Forbid it, pride !

Scene changes.

A wilderness of trees, that stand
Like shafts in a cathedral grand.
Whose state man seldom here invades.
Yet not inviolate these shades.
See, there a spot admits the sky—
A forest Clearing 'tis; and nigh
An Indian hut, forsaken quite,
Offers its shelter for the night.

SURIAL *enters and crosses into the hut, followed by* IRË, ONERET *and* LORI.

Oneret. We've missed the place. Yet Providence ... good.
Here's trace of man, though savage; there, his dwelling,
Though simple and uncouth. Here may we rest.

Irë. Man hath no resting-place on earth, save one.

Oneret. The visionary fit is on him still.
Shake off this moody dream, and come with us.

Irë. Nay, your compassion is my enemy.

Oneret. Say, rather, friend and guardian.

Irë. Much err ye,
In thinking shelter needful from the night,
And things that love the night. What though their howl
Sounds dismally, why should we be afraid?
For is not man their monarch? Answer that.
If they obey not, 'tis because their king

First disobeyed, and hated his own nature;
Whence theirs engendered borrowed enmity.
What need I fear? I am in love with all.
My heart, my eyes are fountains of love's sweetness,
Though now they flow with sorrow. Love ye not?
When ye stand by, I feel love's influence,
As if your hearts in silence were communing,
And wrought a spell about, which, glancing from you,
Made me partake in your felicity.

Oneret. Thou wouldst not let us leave thee, were it so:
For we *must* enter that forsaken hut.
Surial is there, already. Wherefore, Lori,
Hast thou been silent?

Lori. Wherefore comes not Surial?
I have heard other voices than our own.
Hath he found Indian fellowship? So ho!

Surial (*appearing in front of the hut*). So ho!

Lori. So far, so good:—but nearer, better.

Surial (*advancing*). An Indian warrior's master of the tent,
And holds it for his citadel.

Oneret. Is he
Alone?

Surial. Alone. Nor hath he kin or child,
Parent, or wife, or brother—in himself
All of his race.

Lori. I'll in, and question further
This savage mystery. Stay ye here awhile.
[*Goes into the hut.*

Irë. Is the child gone? He sings not, as of old,
But utters common speech. Ye spake of one
Who held direct his lineage from creation,
And had no human binding. To be free,
And thus irrelative, is to be great;
In soul and limb, no greater and no less;
Absolute man, lord of the wilderness,
The mighty waters, and the circling sky.
—The forest-beasts, ye see, have worshipt him.

LORI *re-enters with* ADON, *still disguised.*

Would I had been thus nurtured!

Adon. My name is Dama.
My lair was with the lion. Who are ye?
I thought there was no man but one—myself.

Irë. Lovest thou thy solitude for sorrow's sake,
Or is it native to thee?

Adon. Love and sorrow,
Birth, solitude and being! These be themes,
Which the great Spirit of the Wood discourses
To the attentive soul. At earth's own paps
I drank the plenteous streams. I sprang to manhood
And threw existence from me, like a god.
Words formed themselves, and I pronounced "I love!"

Irë. Were you beloved?

Adon. Then came an echo back,
But it was empty.

Irë. Spake you yet again?

Adon. I mused in silence till a dream came to me;
I had embraced it, but was rudely wakened.

Irë. What heathen hand put out a dream's young life?
An innocent dream, as delicate as air;—
A rapturous thought, that to the thinker came
Unbidden; in whose fine deliciousness
Time melted down to moments?—Who did this?
Bring forth the murtherer, and let him die!

Adon. Die on the battle-field. I am a warrior;—
Would meet him hand to hand.

Irë. Nay, hear me out.
As well even kill a man as kill a dream.
Each act of being's quick with lustrous life;
Quench that, quench this. With each idea stifled,
A world's destroyed.

Lori. Let's in to sleep, then, master;
Lest we such dreams prevent.

Irë. No—dream awake!
Dream ye awake—as I do. Dream awake!

Adon. Mine was a dream by day. I gazed upon
The beautiful, and could not choose but love;
Listened to music, and was ravished. When
The night returned, the Beautiful was not:

A mortal lay beside me on my couch.
'Twas not the goddess I adored by day—
But a mere woman.

Irë. Sleeping, by my hopes
You did not dare to wake her? That is well.
You let her dream? It was your goddess, though,
Albeit you knew her not. Man's love first makes
Woman a goddess; his fidelity
Preserves her such for ever. Much I fear
That you had slain some dream you should have cherished.
Die! die!—for thou art guilty!

Lori. See, he trembles.
The trees cry out upon him; let him die!
—There is a light i'th' forest. Who comes hither?

Adon. 'Tis Justice with the conscience for a torch,
Newly enkindled. I know them by this tremor—
This sickness of the heart; but ask not pity,
When scorn forbids it life.

Oneret (*anxiously, to Irë*). Spake you his doom?

ADONE *and* EREMO *enter, the latter bearing a torch.*

Irë. Look—look!

Oneret. Stay there.

Adone. Well met. Three know we. Who
The other?

Adon. Dama. Mother Earth so called me

The day she gave me birth. She made my flesh
Red as her own; lit wild fire in my eye,
A furnace in my bosom. Let me pass.

Adone. Herds Irë with the savage and the night?

Adon. Night lights this Temple up with stars for cressets;
And Dama is its priest.

Adone. Since fled the loved ones
Sleep visits not our eyes.

Adon. Dama would slumber.

Irë. I need not sleep. If Dama doth, he's guiltless.

Adone. Let him rest where he will. But, Irë, thou
Come with us twain to Mona's oracle.
There have we made like her our hermitage,
And there can rest in safety.

Irë. No—no—no!
I must see justice done upon this Cainite.

Adone. Nay, go with us.

Irë. I'll watch him while he sleeps,
And learn what 'tis he dreams of. To his tent.
The night is chilly—I will to his tent.

Adone. Then we must with him. Soon the morn will break.
We'll seek the hermitage, then.

Adon. Dama would slumber.

Irë. Come—come. Keep silence; for we must be just.

[*All go into the hut except Eremo.*

Enter LUMON.

Lumon. Hist, hist, Eremo!

Eremo. Hush—I saw you. Well
You came not sooner forward.

Lumon. Adon's masquing
Is of the best. In his half nakedness
He looks the Autochton nobly. Expectation
Is far exceeded in him, and disguise
More than is wont thus baffles recognition.
But—(else I labour idly, and defraud
My heart of its much needed fee)—the princess
We must from him lure hence. It must be done.

Eremo. You speak to one who needs no auriscalp
To catch your slightest whisper.

Lumon. Only through me
May Mona, or Rea, hope to head against
The cause of Irë. Should Adone shield it,
And win her lord to sanction—(as may be,
An she have leisure to examine him,
And, on such hints as love is pregnant in,
Pierce through his paint and trappings)—even my cunning
May fail to mend the error. You perceive?

Eremo. Most perfectly.

Lumon. Bring her then forth to me.

Eremo. Adone?

Lumon. Her I mean. Are you so dull?

[*Eremo passes into the hut.*

Now seem I false. Yet, ne'ertheless, my cause
Abandon not; but it to harbour safely,
Myself being pilot, bring; where ignorance,
More shallow than the waters that we fear,
Would shelve it on the coast.
How loiter they—
Sluggish as man, when patient earth is crusted
With frost like tinsel, and each tiny sprig
Wears winter's wool for blossoms.
Come, at length——

Enter ADONE

Adone. How now?

Lumon. To Mona's cave, without delay,
Haste back;—for Irë's enemies are there,
Mona and Rea, guarded well and followed,
Their hearts of malice full. Hie back, at once,
And cheat their fell pursuit. Say, that in vain
You searched in this direction; and divert
The bloodhounds from the scent. Thus Irë speeds
In safety to the east; while westward they
Wander in error.—Why stand you in doubt?
(*Aside*) Then must I lie while yet I speak a truth.
(*Aloud*) Then, know, upon the route I have seen your lord.

Adone. My lord, prince Adon?

Lumon. Even so. Speed, therefore,
If you would have all prosper.
Adone. Quick! lead on!

[*They go. The morning is seen to break in the open space, near the hut.*

Re-enter LORI, IRË, SURIAL, ONERET *and* ADON.

Lori (sings).

Within the sky, above the Clearing,
The dayspring through the clouds is peering.
Oneret. Nay, who can sleep, now morning climbs the clouds,
And light breaks through them, like the blessèd truth
Through once dark oracles, and dim even yet,
Though glowing with its ardour; while the breeze,
Soft-springing, chaunts its requiems to the night,
And joy weeps nectar in the new-fallen dew
That spangles earth's green robe with diamond drops?
Who now would sleep solicit?
Adon. Nature calls
On man to wake with her; meanwhile, complains
That he in cities disregards the pomp
Of rising suns. The earthborn in the wilds
Worships the daily marvel.
Lori. He, the marvel?—
Or else a lover, or an idiot!

Irë. A priest—a god!

Lori. An idiot, with a heart-burn
That he mistakes for love; a marvellous idiot,
That lets his love consume love's seat, with water
Enough in 's brain to quench the fire in 's heart.

Irë. The poets yet shall be the kings of the world,
And govern it with music.

Adon (*addressing the Sun*). Miracle!
Thou art a god!

Lori. Whose god is a familiar,
Himself's the miracle, whose ignorance
Seeks wonders in the common.

Irë. Stand aside
While we confer. I will ordain this man
The priest of an imperishable faith.
Listen, Idolater!

Adon. Thy majesty
Homage commands, O, Sun! which thus can hide
The spirit thou adorest. Lo! thou kneelest
Even in that glorious chariot, wheeling up
The bridge of heaven.

Lori (*sings*).

His idol, ye hear, is shattered;
Its glory, proved false, is scattered—
The unbeheld power behind
Has stricken the Sun-god blind.

Adon. O, mystery of the unseen,
That still haunts Dama's soul! O, let not wisdom
Make me appear a madman to the mad.

Oneret. Art thou astonished, Irë, at his speech?
Turn then from him to Juva. Speak to me.

Irë. Anon. (*To Adon*) Thou art Nature's deacon.
I will make thee,
Be patient but a little while, her priest.
(*To Lori*) And thou her poet. (*To Oneret*) You are yet, my boy,
Like morning, in your nonage. Be content
To bide a pupil for a season. This
Fallen trunk of an oak will serve thee for a form.
Sit down. [*Oneret sits.*

Adon. Let all be done with reverence.

LORI (*sings*).

Ignorance cried on her daughter, Faith,
"Come hither! come hither! come hither!"
But Doubt, her son, brought news of her death,
She had gone; but "whither, O whither?"
And Wonder, an imp, newborn of them *baith*,
Repeated the wail, "O whither?"

There for you is a touch of the genuine Doric, such as they prate in Thebes.

Adon. The lark is singing.

Irë. We depose the usurper—

Thus doom we Rea :—and proceed, without her,
To give thee ordination.

Lori. By the yes
That should be no, let Rea quit the presence.

Irë. She dare not stay.

Lori. Thus let all phantoms vanish.

Irë. Not yet—until the monster phantom pass.
For here the First and Second Death in one
Glides in to take her place ;—a lifeless carcase
That once was Mona. Bid the sexton in,
And bury it, ere the sun make it breed,
As else he must, or be forsworn. Who'd make
An arrant liar of the radiant sun?

Oneret. Nay, master, fear not that.

Irë. We trust not chance.
Is it removed?

Adon. Had it not been, besure,
Ere now the sun had promise kept, and we
Had sickened with the crawling brood.
(*Aside*) O, Irë!
Cunning enchanter! I perceive in thee
The subtle madness of a love suppressed.
Should one now breathe Zalonia's name, 'twere fatal—
Thy shrieking heart would burst with recognition.

Irë. Fool—fool! One may from carrion apprehend :
'Tis more than the dead matter maketh flesh.
It lives ; it wills, desires ; 'tis Heaven's decree,

Its loves and tastes, and whatsoe'er it would,
Be lawful within bounds of modesty;
For to destroy its freedom is not good.
Oneret. The spirit lives, not it.
Irë. Both boy, or neither;
Though body hath its form from that which quickens,
The flesh, misdeemed as dead, is quick with life;
Palpable spirit. Material form from life,
As life from love. Love 's of the ineffable
The primal form. Dama has taught me this,
The earthborn; so shall he be priest on earth.
Oneret. The day is wide awake.
Irë. And I ne'er sleep.
Where's Lori?
Lori. Here.
Irë. Guide on.
Lori. To the east we—
Thou (*to Adon*) to the west.
Irë. We have ordained thee for it.
Go. Fare thee well. There lies thy mission. Our's,
Led by this poet-angel, in the east.
Lead us back, infant, to the orient world.
Oneret. Come. Onward we. Fare thee well, Dama. On.
Adon (*alone*). Thanks, that, at length, ye leave me to myself.
We are, I see, love's puppets, one and all.

—Me has Adone left, of me abandoned!
Yet, had she truly loved, this mockery
Might never have deceived her. Jealousy
Has burned out her affection. Yet, while there,
Even in that Indian tent, I feigned to sleep,
I heard her say, she came in search of me;
And sooth to own, in accents piteous.
—May my suspicion not wrong her anew?
They censure ill, who are themselves untrue!
I'll go this way.

Scene changes.

Again let the spectator view
The Lonely Forest Avenue.

LUMON *and* ADONE.

Adone. You sent Eremo forward. Tell me wherefore?
I'll go no further. We have missed the cave;
Rea and Mona with it. On our path,
Adon comes not. With this my soul is vexed—
Your's still is calm. This is not natural.
Some horrid mystery makes you apathetic.

Lumon. 'Tis time you know the truth.

Adone. The truth?—Aught else
Have I then known? Who hath deceived me? Thou
Who camest as a teacher of the truth?
Canst thou have lied?

Lumon. Not willingly.—If these eyes,
These features, tones of voice, these reverent gestures,
Have spoken of a heart that loves Adone,
Loves her to phrenzy—then I have not lied!
If——

Adone. Stay!—Love! Heard I rightly? I was wrong.
Proceed.

Lumon. May I, then, hope?

Adone. I say, proceed.

Lumon. Next to my cause; nay, more than for my cause,
I madden for thy beauty. O, Adone!
I burned our cause might *crown* us both alike,
The sacred cause of liberty and truth!
Even now, I lead thee by a path I wot of,
Straight to the city. There the assembled people
Are ready to receive us;—and pronounce,—
First, your divorce from your unfaithful lord;
Unite us, next, in marriage and in power;
And, last, secure truth's triumph in our own.

Adone. In our's? O vanity of vanities, when men
Presume the cause of freedom and of justice,
Needs mortal aid; and none so strong as their's
To uphold the social fabric. Heaven, sir Lumon,
Apart from our ambition, can maintain

The state o' th' world, and better agents find,
To do its work than either you or I.

Lumon. Heaven works by means.

Adone. Then, let heaven choose its means—
We'll not choose for it, lest we take the lead,
And shut heaven's guidance out.

Lumon. Heaven speaks in us—
Speaks in our love, whose great emotions climb
Its steep ascent, and gaze on Deity.

Adone. Our love? *My* love is his, who wedded mè.

Lumon. And has forsaken. 'Twas the truth I told thee,
That in these forest wilds I met thy lord.
And not alone.

Adone. With whom?

Lumon. With Oneret.
She whom he followed—her he found—companioned—

ADON *enters behind.*

Is with her still—was, when I parted from them.
He seeks a second love, why shouldst not thou?

Adone. Ask nature why she gave man privilege,
That his inconstancy should break no law
Of her creative process, and denied
To woman that allowance—save at cost
Of desolation? Woman's faith is life;
Her falsehood, death! All sympathies in me
Now live, which thou wouldst slay. Once false to him,

Couldst thou be sure, I should be true to thee?
And what if his desires may wander;—mine
May not? One virtue more belongs to me
Than him, by nature's right. So once again,
I say—*My* love is *his* who wedded me.

Lumon. Then, on my knee, I pray thee! Turn not hence?
I will not plead for love; I plead for pity.
Wisdom the speaker makes more beautiful;
And in that face all radiant with expression,
Burn glorious fires, in whose fierce heat I perish.
Let others live by reason of thy virtue;
Let others live, I say;—but lo, for me,
It bids me die. I have no longer life;—
Thou killest with thy scorn a faithful heart,
For one that, being faithless, scorns thy own.
Can this be justice? Pity me, Adone!
Or crush me for a worm, that to thy foot
Has crawled—a loathsome wretch, that must not live!
Do this. But I shall die without. Thus prostrate,
I but adore; and, having worshipt thee,
Expire of wonder.

ADON (*coming forward*). So would Dama, too;
But the free soul despairs not, though it wonder;
Else 'twould not live a minute; for each minute
Teems, to the wise, with manifold adventure,
That keeps our admiration on the stretch,

Almost to madness.

Adone. Has the earthborn left
The steps of Irë?

Adon. Yes, in search of thee.
He'd have thee follow on the path he goes.
For this, thy worshiper, his way lies thither,
When he can summon strength to rise once more.
Nay, lady, fear not. Dama you may trust,
King of these wilds. His royal heart is true,
Of late redeemed to its old purity.
Nay, be assured; and, for thy further comfort,
Learn this. Not Irë wilt thou join alone;
But Adon, too; proved worthier of a throne.

[*Lunon, confounded with Adon's sudden appearance, remains prostrate.*

V.

The Meeting

Scene — Within the Vale of Pyramids,
Whose labyrinth he untrodden thrids,
Who looks our drama's scene upon,
Or fancies, if not staged anon,
Stands many a monumental pile
Of the same type and age and style,
For various uses yet designed.
Palace or temple, hall or bower,
The dwelling-place of human kind,
Where peace or passion have their hour.
A chamber this, in one of these;
Adorned with antique tapestries.

Zalonia *seated.*

Zalonia.

LIGHT-wingèd hours! not more halts time himself,
Though old; as if your plumage had been shorn,
For love with you to toy; like prisoned birds
Shut in Elysium:—absent she, meanwhile,
Whose image still its fountains ever weep.
How, then, fare I? by love himself disdained,
Mistress alone of death, raised from the tomb,

To murther whom I love by being loved.
—Such sleep as fell on me may fall on him,
If Irë's heart speak out. And yet I live.
How, were the waking sure for him as me?
If not—O, doubt of terror! Wherefore I,
Ye laggard hours, would keep your wings still shorn,
Which still I wish should grow. O what a dream
Of contraries is life!

Enter XANA.

Ha! blessèd maiden!
Earth, sea and air! O nature! thy great heart
Beats in my own. What news teems on thy lips,
Thus ripe with life, thus roseate with fresh love?
Into my tingling ears, those luscious words
Drop, like distillèd sounds, thought in the stars,
And whispered down the air. Why art thou mute?

Xana. Nothing *is* silence.

Zalonia. Silence everything!
His name it speaks not, spoken, were a fiat
Would in the wild make order. Mystery!
You have not heard of him? What, not a river
Bore, while it babbled to the desert's ear
Its legend old, the murmur of his name?
What, not a leaf on those huge forest trunks,
Would sigh it softly to the kissing breeze?
A god among them; they so ignorant

As not to know him? These uncivil shades
Need lessoning by love;—their echoes, then,
Were musical with the breathed ecstasy
Of Irë's sacred appellation.

Xana. O,
Were musical? I have walked them like a spirit,
All voice, and multitudinous have been
The replications from each cave unseen;
Nothing but Irë, spell of little merit,
Unless intoned by thy far-sweeter lip.
I am weary.

Zalonia. Ah! then rest thee. Sit thee down.
O, fie, that cloud! Its shadow on thy brow
Swarthens thy fair complexion;—comely, still,
Though it than night were tawnier.

Xana. Kiss me. There.
Is not all well? Hear, now, what news I have.
Dio has come from Thebes. Arrived at Uxmal,
He found the city up, its princes fled,
And Irë fugitive. Armed with the name
Of his great master, on pursuit resolved,
He threads the desert; and, in fine, is here:
Knows all that we would know; but to my questions
Is dumb as a dead oracle.

Zalonia. O lead me
To him.

Xana. Lo, he seeks you.

Zalonia. Ah, heaven! 'tis he.

Enter DIO, *with a scroll.*

Dio! thou comest like an ambassador
Dropt from a better world. If thou have language,
And if that language have intelligence,
Intelligence good news, let fall thy words
Like to a rapid's waters—flood my soul
With tidings undelayed!

Dio. Zalonia!

Zalonia. Tell me of Irë! Nothing pleases me
That speaks of me, not him. You do me wrong.

Dio. With such like innocence, as when an infant
Becomes the author in you of sad thoughts.

Zalonia. Your pardon. Ay, indeed, 'twas senseless in me
To seek an answer ere I questioned you.
We would have news of Irë, noble Dio;
Hast thou won such, oh, let us share the prize,
And Heaven's treasures we will pray upon you,
In dewy showers, so soft in their descent,
And yet so pearly rich.

Dio. Zalonia!

Zalonia. Breathe not my name—breathe his—unless, (dear mercy!)
Thou knowest love has slain him, as once me,
And knowest not if resurrection come
Alike to him as me. Or knowest too well
That it will never come. Then on thy lips
Eternal silence.

Dio. Irë lives.

Zalonia. I am patient.
Tis well to live; 'tis better to live well.
My Irë lives?—lives where, and how? What's that?
Your eyes are tearful; tender as the babe's
You spake of now; your look as innocent.
Such in a man is seeming.

Dio. Would it were!

Zalonia. Would, like a child's, our labour were but sport!
All a child's work is play; and its choice is
Not the thing's self, but type, which, like itself,
In its imagined toil, plays many parts.
But *we* are fancy-bound; and love, though young
For ever, wearies with reality,
And grows as 'twere decrepid,—old like Time—
Halting in harness.

Dio. May I speak my tidings?

Zalonia. Not with that look, as if I should be pitied!
If that thy news be ill, look like despair,
And ice my blood, freezing me, where I stand,
Into a pillar!

Dio. Nay, no cause for that.

Zalonia. All's well, then?

Dio. Irë lives—is near at hand.

Zalonia. This makes that well still better.

Dio. Comes to thee.
Alive or dead, thou art his wanderings' end,
Their object, motive, goal and crown, in one.
Zalonia. The gods crown thee for that; find thee a realm,
Whereof thou mayst be king.
Dio. I doubt my worthiness.
Zalonia. Then so do I. Thy doubt's infectious. Doubt,
Thou art *not* worthy. Power and merit wait
On faith—which looks, from Heaven, on doubt, in Hell.
O fool! to interrupt thy speech. But, Irë—
He's nigh, thou sayest?
Dio. Ay, maiden, nigh—in body;
In mind—far off.
Zalonia. Body and mind! what's this?
Equivocation?
Dio. Truth—the terrible.
Zalonia. O, pity!
Dio. Yes—that noble mind is lost
In wandering passion.
Zalonia. Phrenesy!
An image of like horror in the act
As shows some human sacrifice devout
Offered to malice, falsely deemed divine.
Dio. Malign not highest power,

Zalonia. What power? Is't love?

[*Throwing herself on her knees.*

Beautiful madness! thy idolater
In me implores thy influential shower
That quenches reason. Saturate my brain,
Deluge my heart, and drown me utterly!

Dio. Rise, maiden! (*She resists strongly.*) Rise, lest you provoke, indeed,
Heaven's just revenge.

Zalonia (*starting to her feet*). On you—its messenger,
Its scourge, its pestilence, its bloody sword,
Its evil angel who but breathes to blast,
Speaks but to slay. Hence, plague incarnated,
In human limbs and gesture horrible!—
Hence!

Dio. Fiend or not, 'tis but the truth I speak.

Zalonia. Truth, radiant seraph! Then turn, wrath! on me.
Myself and this joint instrument.

[*Drawing out a sacrificial knife.*

Dio (*preventing her*). Nay, then,
You're mad, like Irë. I must have thee guarded!
What, ho, there!

Xana. Pri'thee, let me speak. Zalonia,
Wouldst passion should transport thee to a fury?

Zalonia. Ay. Love prohibited to anger turns,
And rages like the wronged multitudes

In populous streets, about to overthrow
Some ancient tyranny! Come, Dio, here.
Xana. He will not answer.
Zalonia. Nay, I will no more
Offend him or his master. Does he note me?
Dio. I do.
Zalonia. Then, weigh my words, heed my least look.
I have the inspiration that thou lackest,
Because thou lovest not. Does Irë wander?—
Hath his mind gone a journey? Be it so—
Not with his body. Where else 'tis, you know not.
Dio. My ignorance I confess.
Zalonia. Let his mind roam
Up to the furthest planet; let his feet
Tread any spot on earth:—his soul is here,
Within my soul—from me 'tis never absent!
Thou dost not question this?
Dio. What if I do?
Zalonia. Then, I strike here!—
This steel would slay but me. His heart in mine,
As well I know it is, 'twould slay him too;
Should I in folly pierce his covering.
Dost question it, I say?
Dio. I dare not, if
I would—and would not. I have also loved!
Zalonia. That's music. Dio! I am comforted.
[*She relapses into a delicious reverie.*

Dio. I'm glad to learn it.

Zalonia. Well, thou mayst be glad.
The ægis of some hovering sylph protects me.

Dio. I verily believe so.

Zalonia. In one moment,
I've dreamt a dream of peace.

Dio. When?

Zalonia. Even now.

Dio. A vision was it?

Zalonia. Yes, of blessedness.
A sleeping babe lay on a downy couch,
Its listless limbs in exquisite repose
Gracefully blended, or partitioned, even
As nature pleased to set them for a picture,
The prettiest ever painted.

Dio. I rejoice
Such heavenly visitation has been your's;
And now, while thus serene, if you will please
Confirm this quiet by the altar service [*Music heard.*
Which now we hear beginning; after prayer,
I'll give you better counsel—sage advice,
Which I am charged with by the distant king,
Here, written in this scroll. Say, will you read it?

Zalonia. I will—I will.

Dio. Some half hour hence. But first,
To chapel duty. (*Music.*) Listen!

Zalonia. Let us in.

Scene changes.

Once more to Uxmal you return ;
Again into the palace borne,
And witness there, as heretofore,
That archèd Arab corridor.

REA, LUMON *and* EREMO.

Rea. Come you from Dio ?

Eremo. Ay, most sacred priestess.
But if you hope for approbation there,
Délusion ne'er was stronger.

Rea (to Lumon). Then, sir sophist,
You've joined the weaker side. But not the less,
Trust in our cause ; this missive represents
Strangely his monarch's will. If he be right,
From time's beginning has experience erred,
The royal mind we serve has suffered change,
And the whole course of Providence been turned
From what the world has witnessed.

Lumon. Learn a secret.
Still 'gainst the distant king my war has been
Whose mystic rule disgusts me. 'Twere my joy
To strive with him directly.

Eremo. Here comes Surial,
Whom Dio sent with me, to speak his mind
Fully instructed in the solemn task.

Enter SURIAL.

Rea. You look offended, Surial?

Surial. No—not I,
But my great sender's Sender. Our poor anger
Hides what 'twould shew, his wrath ineffable.
Without his warrant, have you thrust yourself
Into his seat of power, and seized upon
Authority not your's. Were Iē wrong,
Or you, *he* were the judge, and he alone.
'Twas his to read the sinner's heart, not you,
To judge both act and motive; never yours
To judge the latter, which, in what has passed,
Your special censure aimed at.

Rea. If our zeal
Has overstepped discretion, Dio's caution
Is lukewarm compromise.

Surial. His honour, priestess,
By all—he saith—were spared but usurpation,
Considering whose ambassador he is.
Whatso wounds him, wounds Thebes.

Rea. Still usurpation.

Surial. Now must I ask of your confederate.

Rea. Whom call you so?

Surial. This Lumon.

Lumon. Ask me what?

Surial. How comes it that the princess, who partook

The guilt or error of your flight, now shuns,
Or is shunned by you—she of whom we heard
Your friends i' th' city boast, she wore a crown
That more than half was yours.

Lumon. Have I not said,
A warrior of the wilds bereft me of her?

Rea. Answer no question. See where Mona comes.

Enter MONA *and* EREMO.

Mona. Fled! 'Tis not well! Let not the wanton 'scape!
Bring her to trial for her double treason.
'Tis your's in charge. You shall make profit of it,
If you attach her person. The false harlot!
So false are to themselves, who're false to us,
Our order, and our rule.

Rea. You hear, my lord,
The prophetess. She reigns in Uxmal, now.
'Twere best you sought out Dio, ere too late.

Mona. When Thebes shall hear what we have done, we hope
For better judgment than what Dio utters.
His ear has been abused by false reports.
Our vindication in our consciences
We have fairly entered. When the reckoning comes
We know the way to meet it.

Surial. Be it so.

The words of Dio I've repeated to you;
And there my duty ends.

Mona. Return to him;
And, in like manner, these our words repeat.
Come, Lumon. Your conversion serves our cause.

Scene changes.

Lo, a Savanna broad and grand,
An ample space of table land.
In the far distance rocks arise,
And lift their terrors to the skies.
Beware, too, where you step—for know,
Midway yawns deep ravine below—
A pile of stones upon its edge,
Loose structure for a narrow ledge.
There, strangely gathered, greets the sight,
Pyramidal in form and height,
For altar meant, and bears on it
A tablet with strange signs o'erwrit;
A hand, whose gesture doth express
Intention to devote or bless;
A dove, a yewtree, and a heart,
Pierced with an arrow, shorn apart;
And o'er the tablet soars in air
A cross colossal, which doth bear
In monster foldings, branch and stem,
A Serpent huge twined over them.

ADON *and* ADONE.

Adone. Where, Dama, is the dread ravine you spake of?

Adon. This *was* it;—is. But what has man built here?

Adone. Built where?

Adon. Here, on its edge.

Adone. Is that its edge?

Adon. Here, where this altar stands.

Adone. Yon heap of stones,
That tablet, and that serpent-folded cross:—
What may this pageant in the desert mean?

Adon. May one like me interpret? Though we fail,
To dare is virtue.

Adone. O, most surely.

Adon. On
The verge of the steep precipice, as in haste,
These uncemented stones are rudely heaped,
But as a warning;—for the slightest touch
Would cause them topple to the gulph below.
—Yet have they other use;—for, altar-like,
They serve that tablet, as it were a shrine
Crowned with yon Titan cross, thus twined about
With a proud crested serpent, of such size
As monsters nature.

Adone. 'Tis the sculptor's license.
—Canst read the tablet?

Adon. Note the hand. 'Tis closed,
Save the forefingers, which, extended thus,

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Do consecrate whate'er they seek to cover.
The dove which hovers by that spiral yew,
Whose flame-like apex ever points to heaven;
And that pierced heart, devoted unto death.

Adone. Their meaning I half render.

Adon. Wholly, I.

These symbols do imply that marble's sacred
To love and immortality, and one
Whose cloven heart is destined for the urn.

Adone. Zalonia?

Adon. That may be the name, indeed.

Adone. Ay, very like. Stand by awhile.
Reflect,
Adone! O disgrace and shame! By fraud,
Art thou made traitress to thy lord and throne.
He false to me, while I *seem* false to both.
Doubtless, this is Zalonia's burial place—
Love's martyr and fame's heroine; I their slave?
Here I designed a sacrifice; and find
The victim found already. If I die,
My clouded honour is a quenchèd sun.
O, what have I to do with dying, who
Have yet to prove me well prepared to die?
Why should I lie beneath the grave, when, on it,
My reputation, like a corse, cast forth,
As by an earthquake, taints the sickening air?
I have a task to do—for that will live.
—Here, Dama!

Adon. Lo, you where a friend rejoins us.

Adone. What! Irë's self?

Enter IRË, *in changed attire.*

Irë. They say I'm not myself.
Wherefore? These robes disguise me.

Adon (*aside*). I have thought it.
Mine do, I know.

Irë. Not, like the old, become me.
Naked were I once more as nature made me,
I were the same man still. *Those* foldings shut
My heart up, which now beats and makes these heave
As life were in them; whence men cry—"A change."
And say, "He's not himself!" Let them rail on,
While I'm at peace, and better know myself
Than e'er another can—save thou. Thy name?

Adon. Dama.

Irë. 'Tis so. I well remember. Thus,
By linking past and present, I approve
The identity they doubt.

Adone. Know you not me, too?

Irë. O, well—though there be change in thee. Thou wert
A princess, art a woman. Thou hast gained
In dignity by that. I, too, have risen
From priest into a man. What liars are we
When we confer with power. Ah! never truth

Reached thee, or me. They told us, station might
Dispense with all beside, and nature could,
Thereby sustained, despise the elements
That make and feed it. What may it despise?
Love? Say, the whirlwind has no force, when raging,
Or jealousy! Call hell, dissolved in fire,
Iced water to cool wine for revellers!
We'll witness both, unchallenged.

Adone. Out, alas!

Irë. Wailst, as thy grief were greater? Think on mine.
Thy petty grief weeps but enjoyment lost;
Mine; baffled nature—bitter destiny!
O, thine inheritance hath been enjoyed;
Mine, ne'er possessed,—but leaguered round with fire,
To bar my way, and banish me for ever!
Who was the felon kindled first the flame
That made the entrance death? I'd look on him,
Who put the yoke on manhood, and dammed up
Life's river, that, when fell heaven's shower, it needs
Must overflow, and choke the shrieking heart!
The tyrant felon:—See I now the fiend?
Good. Crown him, king of hell!

Adone. Henceforth, my grief
Shall worship thine in silence.

Irë (*solemnly*). Worship Heaven's!

Mine's but a mockery. *There's* the agony,
That makes the planets suffer.
Adon. This is more,
Not less, than reason. Knowst thou what thou sayst?
Irë. Ay, verily. I fable. Trifle thou
With truth, and it shall fondle thee into
A little child again. 'Tis now my mood,
To prattle like a nurse. Thou understandest?
Adone. Wert thou a god, I need interpreter.
Adon (*aside*). My mind is on the stretch. I had not deemed else
Riddle for me too hard.
Irë. Thou hearst my words.
Heed them.
Adone. The outward ear suffices not.
Irë. What! eh? Even so. No inward eye to see,
No tongue without to teach; no wonder you
Are wanderers yet—while I have found the bourn
Of all my travail's travel.
Adone. What bourn?
Irë. This.
Zalonia's resting-place. Here I repose,
For this I threaded forest wilderness,
Footed unwearingly the pathless plains,
Savannas bounded only by the skies;
Or paced, erect, the ever silent banks
Of solitary streams, while, in my heart,

Were sounding mighty oracles, like voices
Sent from the deep, below me or above,
Both near and distant, each the other's echo,
Until I could not fail to understand
That, in the wilds, for me great nature had
Caused her cathedral service to peal forth
Its glorious anthems, as I softly trod
Her temple's nave, and aisle, and chapelets,
To its chief shrine. Creation's altar, this.—
Erected unto love, in the great act
Creative imaged thus. What else could I,
But prostrate worship here? having first plucked
Those lying robes from off my burning limbs,
That made my being hell! How long I lay
Absorbed in adoration, wondering time
Neglected to take compt. But when I waked
No less than Dio's self was watching by me,
Who, in these princely garments freshly clad,
Scarce knew myself for Irë. You're amazed!

Adone. A story so particular and strange
May plead for admiration.

Adon. What are these?

DIO *and* LORI *enter.*

Dio. We have sought you, sir.

Irë. So—so! You've tracked the deer, then,
Even to his secret haunts. He fled, and fled:

But bore the shaft within his aching side;
So here lay down, to conquer pain by death.

Dio. What shaft?

Irë. Even that which pierced *her* heart. One stroke,
One arrow clove our spirits in the midst;
Both bore the same intolerable wound—
Both would be buried in one sepulchre.

Dio. The shaft you censure is love's quickening fire;
That, where it wounds, enflames a nest for life,
An active little angel of the hearth
That blesses its producers. Come with me.

[*Leads Irë out in a state of abstraction.*

Adone. A stranger.

Enter EREMO.

Adon. No. Eremo.

Eremo. Too well known,
Perchance, to thee, once Uxmal's princess—now
Merely Adone.

Adone. Insolent!

Eremo (showing a scroll). I bear
The authority you have lost. You must with me.
Better with peace and dignified reserve,
Than force provoke, which, at my call, is ready.

Adone. You bear the mandate of the Powers that Be.
I piously submit, as to myself
I should have claimed submission.

Adon. Thank the sun
That quickens earth, my mother! Dama owes not
Obedience unto man. Hence! Dama is
The shield of woman. Ere you touch her freedom
You first must slay his honour. Off! away!

[*Eremo is pressed at the point of Adon's lance towards the temporary altar.*

Eremo. Who art thou?

Adon. Thy preserver! Man! avoid
That cairn, whereto thou now retreatst, or, with it,
Plunge down the precipice. A touch, it topples.

Eremo. Ha! is it so? Then it shall down. It is
An altar built to the new heresy.
What, ho! a rescue!—Ho! Sirani!

SIRANI, *and two others, enter with javelins.*

Look!
See here another of those shrines accursed,
Which, in the valley of the pyramids,
Have still insulted us. It stands on edge,
Of a ravine. Down with it to the gulf!

[*They attack the pile, altar and shrine, which almost immediately give way, and disappear below.*

Adon. Have care, ye down not with it.
Wonderous Heaven!

[*The removal of the pile displays on the other side of the ravine an elevated point of rock, on which are seen standing, Xana, and, veiled and seated, Zalonia.*

Lori. This must bring Irë back. Ho! Dio—Irë!

[*Rushes out, calling.*

Eremo. What forms are those? They look divine!
I fear me,
The worshipt Powers whose types we desecrate.
Shun we their wrath!

[*Exit, in haste, followed by Sirani and his companions.*

Re-enter IRË, DIO and LORI, *followed by* ONERET.

Lori. Lo! the Divinities,
The pile that fell so thunderously now
Veiled from our mortal view. [*Goes out.*

Irë. O, miracle!

Dio. It works right well; and shall by gradual steps,
Lead to an issue which, wrought suddenly,
Might startle to distraction.

Irë. See! they rise!

[XANA *and* ZALONIA, *still veiled, rise up from their seat, and cautiously wind along the edges of the ravine, until, at length, they advance to the front.*

They walk the narrow ledges of the rock,
They follow where they wind, conducting them,
As it would seem, even hither where we stand.
Dio. Even to this self-same spot.
Irë. And so it is.
Why should their presence touch me thus? Who's she,
Whose countenance is veiled, as if too bright
For mortal eyes to gaze on?
Xana. Listen Irë.
Irë. My name! Speak on.
Xana Pity, in heavenly bosoms,
Lives but a finer rapture:—subtilly
Works with the universal ecstasy
That keeps creation pure;—with thy heart's throbbing,
Has numbered beat for beat;—for thy lost love
Wept tears unnumbered; and, to smile with thee,
Howbeit sadly, sends with me this virgin
To fill the place of thy Zalonia.
Irë. The place?—My heart?
Xana. Thy heart. So was I bid
To say.
Irë. There is no room. Zalonia left
No void there, since itself she never left;
Proves here an altar indestructible,
Sacred to love and immortality!
Xana. To love and death.

Irë. No! Life! whereto, from death,
Love soars transformed, all spirit! My dull heart
Is lit, as with an angel.

Xana. Widowed art thou,
And still persistent in thy solitude?

Irë. No solitude—for she is present ever.
Nor widowed I, since while I live, she lives.

Xana. Ay, in this maid;—not otherwise, I trow.

Irë. To do what thou wouldst have me were remorse.

Xana. At least, you will look on her—touch her hand.

[*Xana places Zalonia's hand in Irë's.*

Irë. Her form is like Zalonia's! May her face
No such resemblance bear!

Xana. Be judge thyself! [*Withdrawing the veil.*

Irë. Art thou a sorceress? A spectre, she?
—I must not be beguiled. The spirit-land
Is surely not a prison, and the shadows
May leave its groves in pity, and haunt earth,
When one they would make happy lingers on it.
Immortal! mock me not!

Zalonia. Feelst thou not, Irë,
My hand thus placed in thine? Its trembling tokens
Too much, 'tis mortal flesh.

Irë. I know not that;
It thrills me—to the heart. Methought, 'twas cold;

But I, in sooth, am fevered; and the world
To me hath long seemed winter. She I name not,
Yet whose name's letters in my heart are veined,
The channels through which circulates my blood,
Was like to thee, though not so pale, as fair;
Eyes soft as thine, and piercing; brow as ample;
A lip as intellectual; voice as gentle;
Stature as stately, with a grace of motion,
Was never swan might rival. The rare resemblance
Would make me think me mad.

Zalonia. Your passion cannot
So wildly speak; but that it strikes upon
The harp-like reason, music from its chords
Awaking like a lyrist.

Irë. Were it so!
—Speak what thou wilt, for if my soul hear rightly,
Tones such as thine must be veridical!
And if it rightly see, truth's form itself
Diviner were not. Whiles I list and look,
To doubt were to profane thee; hence, sayst thou,
Thou art Zalonia, I must needs believe thee,
Without an oath.

Zalonia. I am Zalonia.

Irë. Hast thou not died?

Zalonia. I thought I had, indeed.

Irë. You thought so? Stranger still! But thought in thee

In me 'tmay be no more! I'll prove it, now.
This palm is warm. Pri'thee, on those sweet lips
I'd print my first of kisses. O, true life,
Thou lookst like mercy stooping over sorrow,
Breathing vitality into the corse
Of the self-slayer. Were it possible
Thou couldst deceive me, reason were adrift;
But, since that cannot be, the helmsman guides
Even passion's bark in safety.

Zalonia. That is well.

Irë. Yet tell me more. Where hast thou been?

Zalonia. Ah, there!
The desolate region of the dead, indeed;
This maiden watched my waking, as I lay
A sleeper in the sacred pyramid,
Wherein they made my couch.

Irë. Thy couch?—But not
Thy everlasting one?

Zalonia. It seems so. Such
His mercy whom we sinned against; the sin
Itself permitted, as I've since been taught,
To work his sovran will and providence.
—You muse still, doubting wherefore I came hither.
Why there sat veiled? That, and what else I did,
Was by direction, Irë, not of will.

Irë. Ha! this is as I dreamed. Ho, Dio! wake me.
If thou canst do such things, why, bid it thunder,

That I may have assurance. Dream I still?
Let me hear voices;—other than our own—
Mine and Zalonia's. Dio, live we? Speak!

Dio. Most certain, Irë; in my master's name,
I vouch the truth of all.

Irè. Zalonia!

Zalonia. Irë! [*Embracing.*

Ire. Why, our tears mingle! there is grief in joy!

Dio. Ay, so, there is—for peril yet impends,
Of which your pupil, Juva, testifies.

Irë. For further witness that all this be real,
Let him speak too.

Oneret. I will, but with regret,
That I must speak of terror. Not alone,
Eremo to us ventured. Know, misled
By Lumon, who has joined your enemies,
The usurping Rea, and the lying Mona,
The ignorant populace with them have sided;
Whence they conduct as 'twere an army hither.
Wherefore, I pray you, speed to some defence.

Dio. For that I've taken order. Come with me;
All—all. Where's Lori? Gone! What took him hence?
Come, you. This valley of the pyramids,
Has yet more wonders. If, at last, we perish,
Love will have made this moment rich as years.

VI.

The Miracle.

Scene— A Prairie wide, an ample plain,
Spread out in smoothness, like the main
Upon a calm and sunny day,
When every billow rests from play.
Calm day is here,—but not serene;
Such calm as oft doth storms prevene.
A murky lurid atmosphere,
That threatens tempest, dread and drear.
But what recks it in wild so lone?—
Look yet again. Encampments thrown,
Though scanty, o'er the prairie rude,
Betoken it no solitude.
These tents by human hands were reared,
Zalonia's foes it may be feared.
From one of which there issue now
Three forms whose features well we know.

Rea *and* Mona *attended.*

Mona.

A STORM is in the air.

Rea. Let it rage forth.
We triumph.

Mona. Safely in our gripe we hold
The harlot and her lord. For Lumon's sake,
We should walk wary in this business.

Rea. His name has served us well, and his conversion
Merits reward. In his religious robes,
And Irë's office, by the popular choice
Advanced to that high dignity, he wears
Both like a credulous knave. Your infidel
Is at the bottom a believing fool,
And Lumon one but of the wiser sort.

Mona. There are in folly, then, degrees of wisdom.

Rea. Itself is but the smallest. More and less
Are the defined extremes.

Mona. Hush! Here comes Lumon,
In right pontifical attire.

LUMON, *attired in* IRË'S *sacerdotal robes, enters.*

Rea. Hail, prelate!

Lumon. My benediction on you.

Mona. What of Adon?

Lumon. Fair shew of our good-will I've made to him;
And as by my advice he took disguise,
By my advice he leaves it. Like himself,
He soon appears—the prince. We, then, our own
By his authority shall reinforce.

Rea. Knows yet of this the princess?

Lumon. She s not
Identified him even When they meet
Again, she'll think it strange. Anon, they will;
Both here directed straight.

Rea. For your news thanks.
Know, in return, we have detachments out,
That soon must bring in Irë and the Risen.
Sir, they must stand their trial, and, anon,
We'll teach you the ordeal we propose.
Dio dare not object, as 'tis set down
In Theban statutes of most ancient date.
—There has been practice. Let them dread the like.

[*Exeunt Rea and Mona attended.*

Lumon (*alone*). Now, Irë's power is mine. But not, like him,
I use it with a conscience. Celibate
Is but a name, which he misdeemed a thing.
Awhile, I serve;—hereafter, to bear rule.
—With Adon I have made my peace; to him
The proofs of his queen's virtue have confirmed,
Which much she lacks of his. Let grow her doubts;
With them, my hopes. For never I resign
Passion I once have felt. Who's this?

SURIAL *enters.*

Surial. Your pardon,
If exigence make me now forget your state,

And pray of you the means for safe delivering
This missive to prince Adon.

Lumon. Give it me.
Why, 'tis the hand of Oneret. This may
Advance my purpose. Fare thee well, sir.

[*Surial departs.*

Ha!
Here comes Adone. I'll give her the letter.
In her it needs must waken jealousy.

Enter ADONE.

Please, lady, look upon this superscription.

Adone. A letter to my lord?

Lumon. True, lady. Take it.

Adone (*taking it*). To him—and he far hence,
And all in ignorance of his whereabout?
I am my lord, he absent. Open, paper—
Signed "Oneret"? O, passion! Read it for me.

Lumon (*reading it*). "Myself disguised, where others none suspect,
I penetrate; and cunningly detect
Concealment;—in the earthborn Dama see
The prince, who in the page may now know me.
He now encaptived, I still free;—behold
A faithful love, if haply overbold.
Some means I have that him at large shall set,
No prison-gates should keep out ONERET."

Lumon (*returning the letter*). You're pale.

Adone. Pale? The white cinders of the cheek
Conclude the heart is burned to very ashes.
But in the embers still there lives a spark
Might prompt a conflagration.

Lumon. Wherefore, princess?

Adone. Why, to consume the proof I've still resisted,
Which, now established, makes the sun appear
A place for tortured souls, from whose hot beams
I pine for darkness. Where's the prince—this Dama?

Enter ADON, *in his princely attire.*

Adon. Here, lady. Now you know me, no surprise?

Adone. O, world! O, wonder! but the last forestalled;
The first, with thee, I've lost; now, surely lost,
Late only deemed so;—in which error, I
Mistook myself for thee, and opened this.

[*Giving him the letter.*

Adon. I've read it.

Adone. Ay, and those preceded it,
No doubt. No doubt. O, truth!—O, miracle!
I have been long deluded.

Adon. Ne'er till now.
Where can be Oneret? Her loyalty,
Which she calls love, led her to this. No more.

Lumon. No more than this led him? As well confess.

Adon. "A faithful love"? No—nought by her said, done,
E'er justified my hope. Her love, I've noted,
Anchors on Lori.

Adone. What! O, perjury!
Nay, when was falsehood wanted in a plea
To misdirect intelligence, how wise
Soever! When was man to woman true,
With nature's warrant for his wanderings?
In the delusion of your smiles I've lived,
Which you have worn in pity.

Adon. Nay, Adone.

Adone. Stand by, sir. Still be pitiful awhile,
And let us keep apart. It were well, perhaps,
We came no nearer ever.

Lumon. Well, indeed!

Adone. O, love! O, death! How have I lived in thee,
To find myself thus banished from all refuge—
Cast forth to sorrow and contempt. Cut off
From my life's fountain—prematurely slain.

Adon. Be the past veiled in its own darkness. Hear me.
By the earth's sanity, heaven's crownèd pomp,
And the sea's wealth unreckoned, lo, I swear,
Your future shall be cloudless as your honour.

Adone. 'Tis not unclouded.

Adon. Who dare else say so
Should perish in his falsehood.

Lumon. So! brave anger!

Adon. Have I not watched thee like thy guardian angel,
In guise of a poor savage suitor?—marked thee,
With virtuous resolution, scorn the tempter,
And bring him to his knee? The fault was mine
That placed thee in such peril; all thine own
The triumph which delivered. Then, despise not
The penitence that I impersonate;
And here, before this slanderous hypocrite,
Whose interest will make him beastlike dumb,
Wear thy fidelity for a coronal,
And thus, with brow unblenchèd, pass him by.

Adone. Peace found at last! O, Adon! take me to thee,
And let me fill that heart of thine again!
—For him.

Lumon. Forbear.

Adon. 'Twere prudent you forbore.

Lumon. I might resent, but will not.

Adon. Best you should not.

Lumon. Lady, shall I have audience?

Adone. Not from me!
O, my dear lord! this most unwomanly passion,

Which has my bosom poisoned, shall from thence,
And never more infect it.

Adon. Let me kiss thee!

[*They embrace.*

Lumon. It sears my eyeballs!

[*Rushes hastily into encampment.*

Adon. Thus it should be. Sweet,
Thy wanderer has returned; I am at home
In thy tried heart, and trusty. These rebellions
Of will against the reason are assigned,
That, from the conflict, we may win and merit
The peace we would enjoy.
But—soft—that letter
From Oneret. Her loyalty deserves
From both of us regard. We must resume
Our prison, in appearance; so to learn
Her plans for our release, and save her harmless.
Come in, Adone. [*They retire into encampment.*

ZALONIA *and* DIO *enter.*

Zalonia. Caught in the toils? Why do you bring me hither?
Away from him, in whom I live or perish?
They've taken him as one they would destroy!
I heard them say, they'd doomed him to the death!
His crime, apostacy! Apostacy?
Conversion rather to the truth of love!

For is not love, religion? What else is so?
Love that gives life; why should he die for love?
And thou, that standst for Thebes, and hast professed
To pity him and me; why art thou here,
As one consenting? Nay, as more—as one
Who hath authority most paramount,
And yet exertst it not? Diplomacy!
What is diplomacy? A public lie!
That, with a politic ostent, goes mantled;
Even craves suspicion, as it doth suspect,
And would be doubted; should it speak the truth,
Would fain be disbelieved.

Dio. Is it possible?

Zalonia. Lest it by chance reveal what it would hide.

—Let me know what you mean! Assure my soul,
That Irë is secure from cause of dread;
Or, if not, on thine own, I charge my ruin!

Dio. Why is thy wrath thus sudden? pray, be patient.

Zalonia. Patient and sudden? Wrath and I are one!

Patient as justice, when he means to doom;
Sudden as mercy, when she flies to save.
I will be both—or would. To thee show calm
As tempests ere they blacken. But for him,
Be swifter than the lightning, or the winds.

Dio. Be thus to me, as thou hast said.

Zalonia. I am—

But thou art wild; wouldst madden me with words,
That signify just nothing; wouldst to soothe,
Talk me to idiocy; and me, thus fooled,
Rob of the only treasure that I value.

Dio. Indeed!

Zalonia. Indeed. Thou now hast heard the truth—

The truth of truth. Up to heaven's vault I shout it,
Waiting reverberation. From the tomb
Brought back to life, love born anew from death,
Sanctioned by resurrection; have you snatched me
From the grave's maw to thrust me back again,
With tyrant cruelty unparallelled,
Food for the hounds of desolating night?
—See thou to Irë's safety; that he live—
Live for my love; or doom me to like death.
Off with this mystery of state, or know
I am thy victim. Off with it, at once!
And vex my soul no more.

Dio. Shall I be heard?

Zalonia. You shall. Nay, speak.

Dio. The law must be obeyed—

My duty done to Thebes. For your offence
It must be purged by trial. Faith in me,
If you will put it, may avail to save.

Trust thou in my direction. In thy hands
Is placed thy lover's fate.

Zalonia. In mine?

Dio. A bitter cup they'll offer; fearlessly
Drink of it to the dregs. I will be by,
Doubt not. Have faith in me. We are disturbed.
Forbear, then. Trust, I say.

Zalonia. O night and time! [*They go out.*

Re-enter REA, MONA, *and* LUMON.

Rea. You have read the statute?

Lumon (*shewing a scroll.*) Here it is.

Mona. Explain
Its purport.

Lumon. This. For him who is apostate
And her who has evaded doom, a just
Ordeal is appointed. Of the draught,
Aforetime drunk in Thebes by their Alcides,
Ere he destroyed his children, she must drink.
Prepared it is within, by spells and charms,
Fermented to the height. With its dark stream
A demon enters, who, reluctant still
To mischief, must obey yet higher power,
And with such fury maddens whom it fills,
That the possessed, mistaking friends for foes,
Will strike the weapon she is armed withal
Into the heart of him she best has loved.

That done, the strange force, spent, yields her to slumber.

Rea. This refined justice has a double edge,
To sentence both in one.

Mona. The exquisite
Subtlety of it pleases.

Rea. Ho! Eremo.

EREMO *enters.*

Prepare the seats for judgment. In the presence
Of the all-witnessing orb, this solemn act
By law must be performed; yon azure arch
The ceiling of the hall; the hall, the air,
Whose bounds alone exclude; for justice would
Invite the world to see her vindicate
Edicts that heaven hath spoken.

[*Eremo and others, meanwhile, make the necessary stage arrangements.*

Dio comes,
Who symbols Thebes.

Mona. The Prince and Princess, too.
Zalonia by them borne? Take we our seats.
Lead Irë hither.

Enter DIO, ADON, ADONE, ZALONIA, LORI *bearing the chalice of charmed liquor;* SIRANI, XANA, *with a sacrificial knife.*

DIO (*taking a seat*). Hear me, in brief. From
Thebes I have returned,
And follow ye from Uxmal, whence ye fled,
Leaving the city in the people's hands,
Who rule in their own name. But ne'ertheless,
Here I support the authority of him
Whose sceptre rules us from a distant throne.
Lead forth the accused. Keep order in the Court.

Enter IRË, *guarded, and* SURIAL.

Irë. Zalonia!
Zalonia. Irë! [*Embracing.*
Dio. So do ye offend
Again, against the law by which ye suffer.
Irë. We are love's martyrs. Willingly we suffer.
Our patience is our triumph. The crushed heart
Is as a perfume, and replies to pressure
With richer sweetness. From the fragrant altar
The odour rises, and the heavens entranced,
Even in the very centre of their arch
The adoring incense gather tenderly.
Hence, we consent to bruising, and all wounds
Take with a sense of glory.
Dio. Happy warriors
Are ye indeed; whom death deprives of nought,
But crowns with all we live for.

Zalonia. Yet hear me,
Whom life's strong instincts quicken. Death or sleep
I would not have; but still resurgent life,
Born every moment, rising still fresh heights,
And reaching aims of being, promises
Of hope, still struggled for and won. To me
Love is as daylight, glows and grows to noon,
Nor sinks until its zenith be attained.
I'd keep awake until the evening come;
Nor slumber, then, but at great nature's bidding,
Who takes but what she gave, to give again,
With unforetold addition.

Dio. You have said.
Appeal to nature. There the victim stands;
And thou the immolating priest, or not,
As thou shalt be inspired. We know not which;—
Heaven judges in the ordeal and not we.
Drink here, while trusting heaven, the sacred wine;
Then do, as thou art prompted from within,
And leave the event to power above thine own,
Whose justice is best mercy. Give to her
The bowl and knife.

[LORI *and* XANA *advance, and present her with the chalice and sacrificial knife. Meanwhile, the indications of a coming storm increase.*

Zalonia. Friends, both! Grow my eyes dim,
Or the day darkens.
Lori. 'Tis the day, whose morn
The tempest threatened. Thicken, now, the clouds,
To make thy act more solemn, calling night
At mid-day to attend it.
Zalonia. Sluggish thick
The air. That cup! O, everlasting darkness!
Thy grasp upon my soul is heavier
Than nature's gloom without me. Mystery!
What, if that wine—Nay, be it what it will,
It can but slay me. So may Irë live
Even if I perish.
Dio. The ordeal waits.
Zalonia. That voice!—Those reassuring tones. I trust thee.
I am obedient to authority.
Give me the cup.
Xana (presenting the knife). And this.
Zalonia. Why this?—Its point
I'll turn upon myself ere him it touch,
So, then, I know the worst. Let me take both.
[*She takes the bowl.*
My faith preserve me! Thus I drink.
[*Drinks.*
Ha! bitter [*Shuddering.*
As the salt water of a deadened sea!

Dio. Stand all apart from her. Give her free course.
Her impulse and her inspiration only
Conduct her to the sequel.

Adon. Methinks, the heavens
Are frowning on this act.

Adone. They darkle strangely.

Zalonia (*abstractedly*). And I am dead as is that tideless sea.
There is no measure in my thought of time.
All is gross presence, crowding me to nothing,
Crushed, crazed—an atom or a mind constrained,
By nature's ecstasy o'errun, o'erthrown,
Destroyed, annihilate.

Adon. The vault is filled
With exhalations which the gloom makes awful.

Zalonia. Cressets aëreal light the bower of love:
The temple groves are amorous with sighs.
Delirious moment! when on him I looked,
And marked the starlike rolling of those orbs
That swam in passion's tear—which, like a sea
In potency, though so minute a globe,
Would drown those goodly vessels; blinding them,
Like some wrecked navy in a stormy night,
With winds and waves, that puts the planets out—
O, how I loved him, then—how love him now!

Adon. A night in day. The air has grown electric.

Adone. The powers are angry.

Zalonia. Silence! There is wrath,
'Tis whispered, for unpardonable sin—
Apostacy! My blood is curdled up,
Like to the milk of hags. Love becomes hate.
The sacerdotal robe, dishonoured, turns
The sphere to blackness, and stark horror, throned
In the sun's chariot, would consume the world.

Rea. Now, then.

Mona. The judgment speeds.

Zalonia. Where is the apostate? Demon, who possess'st me,
Let me behold him. A sister fiend is his,
Will claim acquaintance with thee.
None conduct him.
I'll tread the circle; where I stop, I strike,
And so untruth hath end.

Surial (*aside*). Now, to my charge.
I must be watchful.

Zalonia. Hush! No lullaby
Might wake the babe 'twould rest. Whist! whist! breathe not!
Justice should strike serenely;—choose, with care,
The victim, ere it doom.
Not thou—nor thou.
No temple raiment hath been stained by ye;
No profanation—sacrilege. Nor thou.
I near the felon—oh! [*Approaching Ivë.*

I shudder. Nearer— [*Lightning.*
But yet not close upon. Ha! there he stands!
He hath the garments on him. [*Thunder.*
[*Rushes on Lumon, and strikes at him;*
Irë wrests the weapon from her.

Surial (*aside*). Thus had I done,
By Dio's order, had the doomed steel pointed
At Irë's bosom.

Dio. Lo!—the priestess. See,
She swoons. 'Tis but exhausted fury sleeps.
[*Adon and Adone support Zalonia, and lead her between them into the encampment.*

Rea. Lost! lost! Shame falls on us!

Mona. I do repent me!
[*Rea and Mona follow into the tent.*
[*Lightning and thunder again.*

Irë. Ha! Lightning? 'Tis conviction! Thunder? Sentence!
Not I—but thou art the apostate, Lumon.
Not I (thy saviour now) but thou the teacher,
Whom love commissioned to instruct the loving,
To whom the panting earth looked up to listen,
Whilst thou wouldst shew the way to her improvement,
And progress for her children evermore.
"Forward!" was then thy cry. The sound was echoed,

But ere the echoes dwindled into silence,
Thou wert returning on the ancient paths,
In error's worn-out habit dressing thee;
Apostate, once apostle. By the test,
Forechosen by thyself, thou art foredoomed;
Champion of truth, not taught as ours to us,
In ignorance, but wrought by reason out
To full conviction; then forsaken by thee,
Ere half thy work was done;—withdrawn thy hand
From the full-harnessed plough

Lumon. Make dark the world,
Ye terrible clouds, and hide me from myself,
When all the rest have shunned me. Vengeance! vengeance!
From you I make appeal unto the people—
To them I'll turn. The might of multitudes,
Borne on reaction's tide, which I can shape,
Shall sweep ye, like a deluge.

[*Exit, followed by Eremo.*

[*A terrible storm.*

Dio. To our camps.

[*A tremendous peal of thunder.*

Irë. Nay, there's a crash no shelter could protect from.
'Tis safer here. A peal like that is final.
Methought it launched a bolt.

Re-enter EREMO.

Eremo. Look out!—behold!
O, terribly retributive is heaven.
A meteor-stone has fallen from on high,
And smitten Lumon;—there he lies, a heap,
The skyey mass beside him.
Irë. This confirms
Zalonia's sentence. Shed a tear for him

Re-enter ADON *and* ADONE.

Adone. She wakens. Lo, Zalonia.
Zalonia (re-entering). Irë! Irë!
Adon. The day again is dawning. Now, it brightens;
Nay, now beams broadly out.
Adone. Behold, who comes
With the returning sunshine.
Adon. 'Tis Oneret!
But who are these with her?

Enter ONERET, *in female attire, attended with several* Senators *from Uxmal.*

Oneret. True to my promise, prince, I've wrought for thee
And thy deliverance. With most loyal faith
I wrote thee words of hope, to give thee cheer,
While I went hence, and, through the wilderness,
Returned to Uxmal's city. Thither come,
I told the eager multitudes our tale,
Converting them with marvel. At length, the faith,

Born of the crowd, o'erswayed its rulers too,
And Uxmal's senate, in full frequence met,
Weighing the matter in the scales of judgment,
Arrived at resolution; and, in fine,
Sent deputation forth,—even these,—to greet thee,
And thus invite thee home.

Dio. Thebes is content.

Zalonia (*coming forward with Irë*). Thy words invest me with astonishment.
—Under the influence of that mystic draught,
What then I did, not did; what said, or not;
What judgment gave, what deed judicial acted,
To my blank mind comes like a foreign story.
How thankful am I that no guilt was mine,
To make recovered sense a wretched boon,
Vindictively bestowed. Auspicious fortune,
I see, awaits me: for remorse and grief,
Both joy and love, in a far happier world
Than that we dwelt in ere these troubles came;
The same,—but better taught and wiser grown.

Adon. Love, say ye? Ay, how defecate and pure,
Such as Adone now is certain of.
For see how Oneret and Lori grant
Proof of their mutual binding.

Oneret. Well thou sayst,
But not the best and greatest. This my arm
Thou see'st embracing the beloved's neck;
But knowst not who I am, save Oneret.

Zalonia. Save Oneret?

Oneret. Such is my name on earth,
Where I assume the garb of minister,
And serve right-willingly the hearts that love;
Yet, elsewhere, am I otherwise esteemed:
No handmaid waiting on mere mortal needs,
But queen of beauty. Lori is my son.

Lori, sings.

[*Retiring with Oneret to the back of the stage.*
My part is played. My home's above.
Yes, know me for the God of Love.

Oneret.

God of love—return above!

Lori.

Mother! I come—I come!
Let the spheres be dumb.
I've touched old earth,
And ta'en new birth;
Made strong thereby,
To rule the sky,
As of old—
Behold!
We fly—we fly!

Final Tableau.

[*Both, hand in hand, having ascended an elevation in the distance, gradually melt into the horizon. The whole of the characters stand in attitudes of wonder. Even* REA *and* MONA *come from the tent to gaze.*

Zalonia (*embracing Irë*). All we have seen is vision; all we have done
A dream. 'Tis past. Even so will fade the sun.

ONERET *and* LORI, *repeat, unseen, singing,* "God of Love," etc., *as the Curtain falls.*

END OF UXMAL.

MACÉE DE LÉODEPART.

An Historical Romance

IN FIVE NUMBERS.

THE materials for the following metrical romance were furnished by Miss Costello's "Life of Jacques Cœur," published in 1847. Miss Costello had seen a portrait of Jacques Cœur, at Bourges. "It exists," she says, "in a small chamber used for legal purposes in the Mairie, which is no other than the mansion of the celebrated merchant." This portrait is engraved as frontispiece to her book. There exists another portrait of Jacques Cœur, of which an engraving is given in Denis Godefroid's "Life of Charles VII." It has a different headdress, but the features and expression are identical. In that he appears in a small close cap, furred at the edge, instead of the remarkable turban (of which poetic use, it will be seen, is made in the fourth division of our historical romance) he is generally represented as wearing, and which, although apparently oriental, is merely the costume of the period, worn always by persons of distinction. There is in an illuminated MS. in the British Museum a portrait of the Duke

of Burgundy similarly arrayed; and it *never happens* that the argentier, in the sculptures which adorn his house, is otherwise dressed. It is supposed that the turban is worn through the first four parts of the following drama, and the close furred cap in the last.

Persons Represented.

MACÉE DE LÉODEPART (*Wife of* JACQUES CŒUR).
JEANNE DE VENDÔME (*her Confident*).
MARIE D'ANJOU (*Queen of* CHARLES VII.).
AGNES SOREL (*her Maid of Honour*).
CHARLES VII. (*King of France*).
JACQUES CŒUR (*his Argentier*).
JEAN DU VILLAGE (CŒUR'S *Steward*).
ALAIN CHARTIER (*a Poet*).
SIEUR DE GIAC, LE CAMUS DE BEAULIEU } (*Courtiers*).
GEORGE DE LA TRÉMOUILLE (*a Noble*).
ANTOINE DE CHABANNES, COMTE DE DAMMARTIN (*an Écorcheur*).
CTTO CASTELLANI (*Treasurer of Toulouse*).
GUILLAUME GYMART, GAILLARDET } (*Two Factors*).
MATHIEU D'ECOLE (*Abbot of the Convent of Cordeliers at Beaucaire*).
DUCLERE, SIMONET } (*Two Cordeliers*).
MICHELET (*a Captain*).

Legate from Pope Nicholas, Soldiers, Attendants, &c.

SCENE. — BOURGES — ROUEN — JUMIÈGES — MARSEILLES AND BEAUCAIRE.

PERIOD.—Fifteenth Century.

For Costumes, *vide* "The Life of Jacques Cœur, the French Argonaut and his Times," by Louisa Stuart Costello, 1847.

MACÉE DE LÉODEPART.

I.

The Court of Love.

Scene—*The Town Hall at Bourges, fitted up for "the Court of Love."*

Alain Chartier *and the* Sieur de Giac.

Giac. This hall is furnished for the Court of Love.

Chartier. 'Tis fairly furnished.

Giac. *O mon Dieu!*—and note,
That there king Réne's sister will preside;
Thence speak the sentence, in the suit between
King Charles and our rich merchant.

Chartier. But in the way
Of gallantry, you guess—for both are married,
Cæsar and Crœsus.

Giac. Whose shall be the fair
Agnes Sorel. *Mon Dieu!* King Réne's sister,
Our Charles's queen, shall judge between the rivals!
The merchant's spouse (beshrew her!) likes it not.
Think you, king Réne would esteem this sport
A fitting pastime?

Chartier. Tush! tush! A merry suit—
A very merry suit, and well designed
To make the languid hours the king here spends,
In forced seclusion, move with livelier speed.
King Réne, royal troubadour, who sings
Of love and love and love, his constant theme,
Knows every mood of the platonic heart,
Will, when he hears it, feel but one regret—
That he was absent from the dainty show,
And envy me, his rival in sweet song.
Besides, to tell the truth, our Charles, from boyhood,
Zealous and valiant, needs awakening, yet,
By some device or other—for his spirit
Affects a learned ease, and would forget
He has a throne to win—that the town of Bourges
Is not the city of Paris, nor this castle
The palace of his fathers.
To this end,
The queen herself with the aforesaid Agnes,
And rich Jacques Cœur, contrived this merry suit.

Giac. O ciel! Who bears the cost?

Chartier. Who but Jacques Cœur.

Giac. What, he?

Chartier. He, the king's king—whom wanting, were no king.
Has the king gold, it was from the merchant's chest;
Does the king feast, it is from the merchant's larder.

In truth, our Charles were pauper but for Cœur,
Here suffering disinherison in Bourges,
While there in Paris, and the rest of France,
The English and Burgundian sway the realm.
But, soft! who comes in haste?—What storm's ahead?

LE CAMUS DE BEAULIEU *enters.*

Beaulieu. The king's insulted, and, for once, incensed.
Chartier. By whom?
Beaulieu. La Trémouille.
Chartier. How?—when?
Beaulieu. He met the king,
This instant, coming hither; walked up to him,
Looking defiance, then, with scoffing lip,
Hailed him with, "King of Bourges! how goes the day?"
As Bourges were all his sovereignty.
Chartier. In sooth,
A bitter jest! O crownèd poverty!
For all thy crown, thou art not reverenced more
Than the bare head, but, therefore rather scorned,
And pitied less.
Giac. The king resented it?
Beaulieu. How, you may see; there come they.

KING CHARLES *and suite with* GEORGE DE LA TRÉMOUILLE *enter.*

Charles. Set him free.
Now, by my chivalry, this is a knight,
Affects the clown; that, when he doffs his smock,
Surprise may quicken mirth.
Trémouille. You say right well;
A knight am I, one born of noble line;
No man of the people, like your favourite Cœur,
But courtly of the court, and loathing riches
That grow on mean descent.
Charles. Well, one like you
Should know good manners. Why did you forget them?
Trémouille. Because my king forgot that he was king,
And let the ignoble sway him, to the wrong
Of such as were his peers.
Charles. Now, by the cross!
Whom have I wronged?
Trémouille (*smiting his breast*). George de la Trémouille!
Charles. I know thee now; thou hast pronounced thy name,
And in that name thy condemnation, too.
Now, hear me speak. Man, thou wouldst purchase lands,

Broad lands, for twenty thousand golden crowns..
The golden crowns thou hadst not, so the owner
Sold them, instead, to him who had.
Trémouille. Yes, to Jacques Cœur,
Who now is lord of Toucy and Fargeau.
Their ancient castles to plebeian rule
Have thus been forced to bow. I plead my rights,
My order's rights, against a merchant's coins.
Charles. You have done so. Your suit was urged and heard,
And the stern law has judged the lands are his.
Trémouille. By undue means decision was obtained.
Charles. On a king's honour, you mistake yourself,
Your cause, the trial, and its righteous issue.
No more!—begone!—you are pardoned!
Trémouille. Maybe! Well—
But never pardon I the wealthy upstart—
Let him be lord of Toucy, or king of France;
My vengeance, on the daïs or the throne,
Spreads o'er him ruinous wings, and, vulture-like,
With sudden swoop, shall fall. [*Goes out.*
Charles. Alas, for state!
When birth and merit strive for precedence.
No choice for me. My gratitude, my love,
This Cœur has nobly earned; he has them both,
Is worth them—the magnanimous of soul
Takes rank with monarchs. Go thy sordid way,

Proud Trémouille; thou canst not match with Cœur.
Now, to our queen. The hall is well prepared,
Though o'er its morn, this churl has thrown a cloud,
Our joyance shall, unchecked, shine out at noon.

[*Goes out, followed by his suite and the rest.*

Enter MACÉE DE LÉODEPART *and* JEANNE DE VENDÔME, *followed by* LA TRÉMOUILLE.

Trémouille. Your pardon, madam. Do I not address
The wife of merchant Cœur.

Macée (*with dignity*). You do. Your name?

Trémouille. 'Tis one as proud.

Macée. So, sir! my speech was civil.

Trémouille. Yes; coldly civil; such as well befits
The highborn to the mean. We must change places.

Macée. Strange! but I have scanned him well. It must be he.
None other were so rudely arrogant.
La Trémouille, I guess?

Trémouille. Right, madam!

Macée. To
My lord, then, bear thy plaints, strive thou with him.
Shame to thy malice, that so low can stoop!
Taunt unoffending woman—shame! shame! shame!

Trémouille. True; the new gallantry might have taught me better;
I knew not you were teacher in that school.

You suffer wrong, I grant, yet not from me;
True words are spoke in jest. This merry suit
Has a pre-argument. Loves not your Cœur,
In earnest sort, fair Agnes? Chance gives oft
Proof vainly sought on purpose. In the question,
Was late between us, when I met him once;
Who sat within his chamber, cheek to cheek,
Alone with him—familiar as twin doves?
Agnes Sorel is charming—very charming.
Another time—

Macée. No other time. Nor that—
Nor this! You know not Cœur. Be silent, sir!
Here comes my lord—he'll better answer you.

JACQUES CŒUR *enters with a retinue.*

Trémouille. No! let him answer you; I have done with him.
You are the daughter of a generous house;
Much you forgot in yielding to his wooing;
May, haply, all forget. The man is wealthy,
And gold buys license. Heed you not?

Macée. Cœur! husband!
This man would to the mind of thy Macée,
Suggest the yellow plague of jealousy;
Of thee and thy high motives ignorant—
This Trémouille.

Cœur. Scorn him. Let him be sure,

Before he judges us, he hath the skill.
I've not yet heard the muses ever taught him,
Song, legend, masque, love-lore, or any lore;
So let him canker in his ignorance.
What! moody?

Macée. But a thought. Some other time.

Cœur. Beloved Macée! I may not brook a doubt—
I have a task that needs expediences,
And least from you may meet impediment.
Look up more clearly.

Macée. Base suggestion, hence!
I have no dread of thee, no doubt of thee;
But much for thee I do both doubt and dread,
Knowing that Mammon is a treacherous god,
Expediency a quicksand. But, no more—
I will perform my errand; then return.
Come, Jeanne Vendôme.

[*Exeunt Macée and Vendôme.*

Cœur. La Trémouille! beware!
You will do well in future to be guarded
In uttering your shrewd guesses.

Trémouille. Have a care
More of your deeds than of my words.

Cœur. My deeds?
They're honour's! All my aims are acts—they're prudent,
And in their wisdom prosper.

MACÉE *re-enters.*

Have you sped?

Macée. Not well. But here comes he I sought.

Trémouille. What Charles,
Or Chartier? O, madam! keep you clear
Of kings and minstrels, or your peace is wrecked.

Macée. You're troublesome.
Hail to your Majesty!

CHARLES, CHARTIER, BEAULIEU, *and* GIAC *re-enter.*

Charles. Madame Macée! you're well encountered where
Our queen instructed our dull sense to find you.
I come to plead with you in her behalf,
And that of the fair Agnes. I myself
To plead, in her majestic name, the cause
Of gallantry—such innocence of sport,
Has its one source in generous sentiment
And sympathy of mind, alike commended
By grave philosophy and pleasant song.
Her great example should with thee prevail,
To me conditioned, as thou art to him
Thy wise and prudent lord.

Macée. I do obey—
And will take part in the day's show, convinced,
By such authority, of a subject's duty.

Charles. Then all here stay—anon, the court will form,

Our queen will enter in her state; myself
And my friend Cœur are suitors. Here stay we.
You, Chartier, with song amuse the time.

SONG

(*By Alain Chartier*).

Upon these lips once kissed by thée,
O princely Marguerite!
Is sealed a spell that bides with me,
And makes my lays so sweet;
For still they sing of chivalry,
And love, for nobles meet.

The vulgar soul the tender charm
Interprets, as it must;
But genial hearts, with passion warm,
Can yet be fond and just.
Love only can with life inform
And consecrate our dust!

QUEEN MARIE D'ANJOU, *with a numerous train of Ladies and Knights, here enters and assumes the throne.*

Queen. Ladies and knights! 'tis with unwonted pride,
That, in your Court of Love, your queen accepts
The honoured judgment-seat. Ill were the blood
That was my sire's, transmitted to these veins,
If I acknowledged not the noble impulse,
Of men makes heroes and of women angels.
What is the amorous suit?

Charles. It touches one,
Agnes Sorel, a maid belonging late
To princess Isabella of Lorraine,
Now to your majesty—therefore to me.
Your's her good sense, fine wit and finer grace;
And therefore mine! 'Twere waste for me to praise
The fascination and the loveliness
Of all acknowledged. Early seen by me,
This heart platonic influence soon avowed,
By you permitted.

Queen. Is there nought else?

Charles. This—
A man we call and know to be our friend,
With head more cool, but heart as warm as ours,
Of fortune favoured more—no king in name,
Yet king in means—consorts fair Agnes too,
Is smiled upon by her, and holds her ear
With soft persuasion, corresponds with her,
Has daily, hourly intercourse—until,
With fear our Agnes may prove infidel,
Our jealous soul is troubled.

Queen. Would ye, we
Impose restraint on her, or him? You are not
To learn, love will not be restrained. You're heard.
What answers the defendant?

Cœur. Queen of beauty,
Fair arbitress of love! your majesty,

Suffice it that I plead, the plaintiff is
Disqualified—his love forepledged and wed.

Queen. He has confessed as much. And is not yours?

Cœur. Confession is not proof. Did I confess,
There yet were needed witness.

Queen. 'Tis at hand.
Macée de Léodepart! come into court.

Macée. Must I play such a part? Well! I submit.
Here, royal mistress.

Queen. You've heard the argument. Proceed.

Macée. Belovèd queen! that I am wed to Cœur,
Is known to all, and therewith satisfied
I would conclude; but that most high example
Might justify conjecture, I were fain
To be content with a *divided* heart;
Which is not so. Fidelity in mine,
Would mirrored find itself in that deep sea;
Even his, where all my treasures buried lie;
Whereof bereavèd, abject poor were I!

Cœur. A wife unparalleled—a priceless jewel!
Talk you of treasures, girl? Why, all my wealth
Were not of worth to buy such! Voyaged far
Have I; seen heaps of gold and diamonds,
And gorgeous works in colour and in stone,
In Italy, and in the Oriënt—
But never gem so whole, so pure, so stainless,
As that true heart of thine!

Queen. Such ecstacies
Throw doubt upon the trial; cause the need
Of Agnes' beauteous presence to be felt,
To prove the merchant rival to the king.
Cœur. Let her, I pray, be sent for.
Queen. Be it so.
Meanwhile, this lady may have proof to render.
Macée. I would not, of my voluntary act,
Abate the pleasure of the time and place;
Yet not, for its promotion, would I wanton
With my best feelings, and grow fabulous.
Jacques Cœur has been to me a faithful lord,
Honest and true, of the old-fashioned sort.
—What, if on lady Agnes he has looked
With a delightful eye; . . I know to him
Fair things are pleasing:—What, though he have listened
To the rich music of her speech; . . I know
That hers floats wisdom on its melodies;—
What, though he frequents her society;
There are state reasons for it. The true wife
Would not abridge her husband's liberty—
Sure of his heart, he free may roam the world!
Chartier. The lady Agnes comes.

AGNES SOREL *enters, attended.*

Queen. My royal lord!

Madam Macée, methinks, hath read us both
A lesson we should heed.
Charles. Next, list to Agnes!
Doubtless, we both shall ready quittance have.
What saith the fair Sorel? What passages
Of love 'twixt wealth and beauty have there been?
Sorel. A pretty allegory you suggest,
My sovereign liege—but one, methinks, so old,
It well were obsolete; yet will not perish,
While Jupiters descend in golden showers,
The Danäes will prove mothers.
Charles. Then, poor Charles
To richer Cœur *must* yield.
Queen. "Must"? "Must"—in love!
Love's queen in me resists compulsion's law.
The richer Cœur is barred by his chaste wife,
Who here, in court, objects her prior claim:
And we that prior claim now ratify.
—But he, the royal plaintiff in love's suit,
Hath now no wife, who can, before love's throne,
Hold him in bar. Free privilege is his,
To woo and win fair Agnes, if he may.
But much I doubt her heart is turned away.
Charles. Thanks for thy sentence, love's best arbitress!
Left in the sole possession of the field,
I were indeed weak warrior, should I yield.

Queen (*descending from the throne*). Break up the court! Close our diversion here!
Let us to graver duties. There is need!
Macée. My royal mistress, and my loving lord!
At your command, I have unbended me.
—I trust, no slander touching on my husband
May grow on my submission.
Queen. Be of cheer!
Macée. A merchant's credit is more capital,
Than all the wealth he perils in adventure.
Thus, for my happiness, his honour's pawned.
But for his sake, even more than for my own,
I hold it sacred.
Queen. Nor shall it suffer.
Sorel. It shall not!
In proof, now heed my speech. Great king of France!
I have a tale will witch you.
Charles. Tell it, then.
Sorel. The cunning man, without—(how name you him?)
The astrologer, even now foretold my fortune.
What think you 'tis?
Charles. Make me not guess—but say.
Sorel. This, then the sentence from the stars he brings:—
I shall be nothing less than "the adored
Of the most mighty monarch of the age!"

Charles. Then, thou art mine!

Sorel. What, thine? Nay, now thou dreamest.
Henry of England, I am told, prepares
To add thy crown to his. This granted, he
Must be the greater, sure! Wherefore, I pray,
Permit me passage to King Henry's court,
That I may thus fulfil my destiny.

Charles. Agnes! you mock me! Would you scorn me, Agnes?
By heaven! my soul is fired! What! take my crown,
Henry of England? First, thou takest my life!
For, not without, will I surrender that
Which makes its having other than a baseness!

Cœur. Hail, king of France! there spake the monarch!—these,
Thy words have made me jocund as with wine!
Anon, shalt thou drive out from Normandy
The intruding English! Nor despair of means,
Leave them to me. Now, Charles is king of France.

[*All go out, except Sieur Giac, Beaulieu, and La Trémouille.*

Giac. Spare me a minute, good Beaulieu.

Beaulieu. Ah! wherefore?

Giac. No words. What you shall note will answer you. [*Going over to La Trémouille.*

Giac. Now, are you edified?

Trémouille. With what?

Giac. With what? *Mon Dieu!*

Trémouille. Go to! you are a fop;—and worse, an old one!

An ancient ass, that thinks his braying music.

Giac (with provoking coolness). *Mon Dieu!* I see you've not been edified.

You know not, Charles of France has won the day,
Has driven the English out, resumed his throne,
Where Victory plumed sits with him, on the right!

Trémouille. What do you mean?

Giac. Why, that if I be fop,
And at my years should ape a graver manner,
You doubtless are the ass—and those long ears,
Know not when they hear music.

Beaulieu. Dear Giac!
Nay, this is scarcely generous. Trémouille!
He is but merry.

Trémouille. Let me go! Hence with you!
'Tis you encourage Charles in wantonness,
And trust to songs what should be done with swords;
'Tis you who flatter him, and aid their arts,
Agnes Sorel and Cœur.

Giac. Add, too, the queen;
Whose influence is legitimate, I hope!
They who, by this day's seeming simple sport,
Have waked the soul of France in Charles's bosom,
And roused her genius from the sleep of death!

Now, know me better, sir! No fop am I—
'Tis but the slough the tailor makes for me.
I doff my coat, and prove a warrior!
Mistake me not again. And, for your carping,
Learn rather from the manners you observe,
Than act the censor on them. Ere long, you'll know,
What now you've witnessed, and not understood,
Was charged with glorious issues, wisely planned,
In minds that by your own may not be scanned.

Beaulieu. You have been too rash.

Giac. Bah! He is too splenetic.

[*Goes out with Beaulieu.*

Trémouille (*alone*). Taunted—by him—the facile favourite:—
Duped with a pageant; chid for ignorance;—
Cheated of privilege;—deprived of lands;—
And made the gibe—the sport of parvenus!
Why! what new power is this, that vaunts such sway,
By time unsanctioned, o'er time-sanctioned things?
Let who will yield—I'll hold me yet erect!
Adieu! fond Charles! I'll seek thy enemies!
Agnes Sorel? The Dauphin struck the minx;
Wherefore his angry father banished him
To Dauphiné, to brood on his revenge.
Where with intriguers he doth plot against
The demoiselle of beauty. I'll to him!
Not Charles, but Louis my allegiance claims.

II.

ROUEN.

Scene—Near the Gates of the Town.

OTTO CASTELLANI *and* JEAN DU VILLAGE *enter.*

Otto Castellani. Or I mistake, or you, my friend, are steward
To the rich merchant, the king's argentier,
The great Jacques Cœur.

Village. Your memory is as true
As dial to the sun.

Otto. Your name is Jean
Du Village.

Village. Yours is Otto Castellani,
The Florentine, the Treasurer of Toulouse.
You owe the place unto my master's favour.

Otto. Ha! well reminded!—(*Aside*) Smite him dumb for it,
St. Zachary!—(*Aloud*) Shake hands! We both are leagued
In the same purpose, as I guess. You come,
To witness his triumphal entry?

Village. Say,
Rather, our good king Charles.

Otto. Nay, be not modest—
Charles were not king, but for his treasurer!

'Twas Jacques Cœur's gold that drove those English forth
From Normandy. It makes me feel ambitious,
Village, to be like Cœur in wealth and power,
As in pursuit. A merchant *prince*, forsooth?
A merchant KING is he! It makes us proud—
It makes us hope—who are of the merchant-craft;
It makes us equal with the lords o' th' soil.

Village. Nay, Cœur is lord of many fine estates,
In Bourges to wit, Montpellier and Fargeau;
Not less than forty, as I reckon. Look!
The crowd increases. Who comes hither? Joy!
'Tis Alain Chartier!

ALAIN CHARTIER *enters.*

Chartier. 'Tis I, Village!
Ha! ha! They'll enter soon! Our good king Charles,
With all his court and army, to possess
His own good town of Rouen. Rejoice, kind Jean!
Your master will be honoured. For his largess
To the great cause of France, the grateful king
Makes him conspicuous. Equally he rides
With Count Dunois, Varenne and De Gaucourt,
Alike each dressed, their steeds caparisoned.
Our Charles himself precedes, armed at all points,
His palfrey decked with azure, golden strewed,
Attended by the King of Sicily,

Counts, prelates, squires and priests. Here are the gates.
You'll see them enter. Come with me along,
Of special grace, I have gained you standing-room.

[*The procession passes over.*

Scene changes—Corridor of the Palace.

JACQUES CŒUR *and* ANTOINE DE CHABANNES, COMTE DE DAMMARTIN, *enter.*

Chabannes. I've called you thus aside to buy your favour.
I owe thee many sums of golden crowns—
Yet, stung with spleen, have fallen from your cause,
And joined the Dauphin's to despite king Charles.

Cœur. It was an idle quarrel.

Chabannes. Why, the king chid me
For my *écorcherie;* he called it pillage—
I was, forsooth, a "skinner," *écorcheur!*
Well, be it so! What wrong I did as such
Was well redeemed. The power I wildly raised,
I had wielded in his cause, and that of France.

Cœur. Suffice it, there is one cool head i' th' realm.
Um!—So you joined the Dauphin 'gainst the King.
Evil the son that wars against his sire.

Chabannes. Heaven has declared against the unnatural strife,
Upheld the father, and depressed the son.

There were small chance of my repaying you,
Had I remained with Louis ; . . hence, I am here.
To Charles's fortune I'd myself ally,
The which are you, unless I grossly err—
To him in you I would be reconciled.

Cœur. In Charles's name, Chabannes, I pardon you.
The king has grown a warrior, as you know,
And, plumed with conquest, *can* be generous.
Still need you?

Chabannes. Yes.

Cœur. A thousand crowns, Chabannes,
I'll lend you from my store. Will that content you?

Chabannes. It will.

Cœur. What more?

Chabannes. La Trémouille, with me
Revolted, would return to favour.

Cœur. Ay!
He did insult the "King of Bourges:"—the King
Of France knows nothing of it. Would he guerdon,
For his desertion of the Dauphin's cause?

Chabannes. He asks but mercy.

Cœur. Mercy he shall have.
He need not fear—no more than we fear him.

Chabannes. He has already made his peace, I find,
With dame Sorel. Here, in her suite, he comes.

Cœur. 'Twas overprudent. Still, perhaps, 'tis well.

AGNES SOREL, JEANNE DE VENDÔME, TRÉMOUILLE, BEAULIEU, GIAC, *and* Attendants, *enter.*

Cœur. Welcome, Sorel! The soul you breathed in Charles
Hath of a languid lover made a hero,
Active and bold: he's quite a Mars in battles—
In feats of personal prowess, an Achilles.
France has her king and leader in the field.

Sorel. France has what I have lost. Yet, willingly,
Surrender I my happiness to hers.
Here rests he now?

Cœur. No rest as yet, for him
Or me. We must pursue success, or lose it.
Harfleur must yet be won, Caen, Cherbourg;
Nor may we give advantage to the foe,
Until the sea divides us from each other.

Sorel. War has its charges. Is the cost defrayed?

Cœur. There's not a month's arrear in all the army.
For every soldier's need I have disbursed
His punctual wages. 'Tis my proper service.
Owe I not all unto the king and land,
By whose protection I have won my wealth?
Because I was a Frenchman, and his subject,
The Soldan oft has granted me safe-conduct,
For my stored galleys and my factors both,
Exposed to peril both on sea and land.
Whate'er I have belongs to France and Charles.

Sorel. Whate'er I *am* belongs to both!

Cœur. Most true.

Our state-craft is believed in, now, by all.

La Trémouille, even, is no sceptic.

Trémouille. Sir!

What said you? I was troubled! Pray you, pardon!

Sorel. I'm glad he heard it not. I boast no craft:

I make my heart a patriot offering—

Nor more, nor less!

Trémouille. There's witchcraft at the bottom.

There's no resisting magic; so I yield!

Cœur. And so do I, in such an argument.

(*To Jeanne de Vendôme.*) Fair demoiselle! a word!

[*They retire.*

Sorel. Witchcraft and magic!

La Trémouille!

Trémouille. I charge not you.

Sorel. Whom, then.

Trémouille. There is a stone called the Philosopher's,

Which whoso hath may have what else he would.

It can transmute all metals into gold;

And this, they say, Jacques Cœur has long possessed.

And hence his wealth arises.

Sorel. Trémouille!

Who tell you so, abuse you. Not the stone,

But the philosophy steads Cœur so well!

His knowledge is the magic that he wields:

He knows the markets of the world by rote,
Has seen them with his eyes, and, from afar,
Being absent from them, reaches them with ships.
As many months as hath the year, so many
Of his brave vessels sail upon the sea,
Bound to the Levant; Egypt, that old power,
Has commerce with him; while, at various ports,
More than three centuries of his agents dwell,
In Asia and in Europe. Wheresoe'er
His navies travel, they command respect,
Such homage as to sovran things pertains.
From the remotest East; their ribs full-stuffed
With silk, and cloths of gold, furs, spices, arms,
Ingots of gold and silver; they return,
Like jolly victors all whose triumphs had been
Doubled by Bacchus.

Trémouille. And Cœur's brain, methinks,
Has caught the influence. Were he sane or sober,
He would not shew his wealth to such excess.
The proud, luxurious merchant! Why—his board
Is more than royal; . . not a cup, nor bowl,
No common platter, but of precious metal.
His horses, even, they say, are shod with silver.

Cœur (*coming forward*). I am vexed to hear my wife is discontent
At our proceedings. I would know the cause.
Pray you, step in—and say, I wait her here.

[*Exit Jeanne de Vendôme*

(*Aside*) Not naturally disposed, too stern of mind
For weakness, yet by circumstance deceived,
I fear, beloved Macée! doubt of my faith
Hath, like an alien, in thy ample heart,
Set up his tent, though not yet built his house.
But I'll expel him from the soil!
(*Aloud*) Fair dame,
And nobles! Will it please you, be advised?
The king expects you. Pardon me, Sorel!
I may not be your usher—but Chabannes.

Chabannes. O, willingly.

Sorel. Chabannes can be gallant,
But Cœur—

Cœur. Lady, be counselled.

Sorel. He is troubled!
What means it? Ha! here comes his wedded pride!

Enter MACÉE, *attended by* JEANNE DE VENDÔME. *She passes by* AGNES SOREL, *with a marked and haughty gesture, almost of scorn or disdain.*

Pride? Something worse, methinks! Seek we the king.

CŒUR, MACÉE *and* JEANNE *remain.*

Cœur. Is this our welcome? Then the forehead flushed
Of conquest grows like fear's, and triumph's cheeks
Are pallid as your own, as sunken wild,

Two desert caves, that should be swollen puffed,
The trumpet at her mouth. How now, dear wife?

Macée. Am I yet dear?—your wife? Your widow, rather!

Think not I envy France, or dread Bellona
Hath been too much your bride:—so long divorced,
I might have mourned the absent as the dead,
Had *none* heard from you. But to me while few
And frigid your replies, with trifles baited,
Agnes Sorel received your soul in letters,
Making her wise in every circumstance,
Wherein myself was but an idiot.

Cœur. Trust me, dear wife, such caution was required.

Macée. Fine caution!—from a wife that would conceal,
What to a mistress freely was avowed!

Cœur. 'Tis you avow too freely what you should
Give scarcely thought to, never words at all—
Slandering the king, . . or me. 'Twere shame of you,
To be the tongue of scandal.

Macée. Shame not me—
The honest blush not what they think to say,
And truth, albeit called scandal, still is truth.

Cœur. Truth may be spoke untruly. But your motives
I trust are true; . . else were your words—

Macée. What were they?

Cœur. Nay—be not rash! Nor try too far my patience!

A woman swears submission at the shrine,
And, after marriage, 'tis the attribute
That consecrates her most. Shall all my care,
My labour in the service of the State,
The ambition that on wealth should set the crown,
Dissolve to vapour, become dreams again,
Because a peevish will would dominate,
And a proud wife direct a husband's course?
Much as I love thee, let us henceforth meet
Only to wrangle, as the vulgar do,
Ere I yield aught in this.

Macée. Cœur! I was born
To at least equal privilege with you;
And might, perhaps, in manners and in morals,
Be your instructor.

Cœur. Fond one! not in either.

Macée. In both.

Cœur. Nay, by your leave, in neither.

Macée. You
Too much concede to the gay law of the time,
And countenance wandering appetite for love,
That's only lawful, wedded.

Cœur. Granted. Leave me.

Macée. No more than this?

Cœur. How now? my wayward sceptic!
Must I explain my policy, ere you
Confide in it? Has't been so little proved,
That I must give my reasons, ere you trust me?
Macée. Because I am your wife, I am your slave,
And so but have to do with your commands;—
Were I your mistress, I might share your counsels.
Cœur. Nay, now, dear wife! you fret me! To thy soul,
As to a temple, nought should enter in,
But what is holy. We men in the world,
Do that, in traffic, we'd ourselves not scan;
Yet deem it not dishonour. Better, wives
Should of such things be ignorant; seeing they
Must of the laws that govern them be so.
'Troth, none can apprehend these matters, but
The workers in them; and even they scant well;
Where more of instinct and sagacity,
Than reason guides. Be then, the mart the mart:
Let home be home, and all be hallowed there!
Macée. What words are these? What sin, what guilt define they?
Dare I interpret?
Cœur. Dare, but cannot. You,
Who lack experience, talk of teaching manners?
Modes of convention, creeds of right and wrong,
That differ with the clime, the colour, age?

Macée. You mock me, and, I think, insult me, too,
Else wherefore should I tremble, as if conscience
Were shaken on her throne?

Cœur. Mock you? Not I!

Macée. Not thus my father, in my childhood, taught me.

Cœur. Good man! he had no knowledge of the world.

Macée. How happy in his ignorance of evil!

Cœur. It may be—

Macée. Nay, he was: . . . both wise and happy.

Cœur. Not wise, though happy. You have granted it.

Mdcée. No, Cœur! not so. Men may be largely wise,
Whose evil knowledge is much circumscribed:
Whereof who knows the least, the wisest he.

Cœur. Be you content, and be the very wisest
By knowing nought at all. But knowing nought,
Think not to teach. Let ignorance be dumb!
Yet let it learn! Learn you, to keep a secret.
I wrote you one in my first letter to you;
You told it to our Jeanne de Vendôme, here;
She to Sorel—who thence conceived suspicion;
I sported with her passion for King Charles,
To my own profit. Heaven knows otherwise!
It was for France! My influence, through hers,
Half lost by your imprudence; . . first, I chid you,
And next, resolved on silence.

Macée. 'Twas no secret!

Cœur. It was!

Macée. Not marked as such. Jeanne was in fault,
Repeating my discourse. O, Cœur!—O, husband!—
Who would your wife should live in innocence,
Yet blame her for that self-same innocence!

Cœur. I had not spoke of it, had you not forced me.

Macée. Have I grown hateful?

Cœur. No!—more loved than ever!

Macée. Then, you would trust me more!

Cœur. 'Tis for your sake—
Share you my triumphs. I would bear alone
The troubles that lead to them.

Macée. O, Cœur! Cœur!
You love me not! you love me not, indeed!
Alas! lost heart! I am no summer fly,
That when the winter comes sleeps in the ingle.
I'd bear the cold with thee—the heat with thee—
Extremes of both! Ah! how can I be happy.
Not knowing thou art so? Calamity
May be this moment hovering o'er thy head,
And I—thus blinded by thy wilful act—
May play, sing, talk, and be most blithe of mood,
While thou art on the torture! Cœur! Cœur! Cœur!
I may no more be glad, not even gay,
While this is possible. You break my heart.

Cœur. Cheer up. There is no harm. Jeanne de Vendôme,
Haste !—help your lady ! See what you have done,
In blabbing of her talk. I've served you well,
You, and your family ; . . thus you serve *me !*
Beware how you transgress a second time !—
—Cheer up, dear wife ! Mere shadows of your fancy !
My fortune's at the highest.

Macée. Be it so !
Would I had died, ere distance grew between us ;
Ere you had cause to chide, or put me off
With trifles, like a girl too humoursome
For confidence.

Cœur. No more of this:—no more !
Be calm. We've stayed too long. His majesty
Will shew you in what favour we are held !

Scene changes—State apartment, opening into a suite of apartments, illuminated for a ball.

KING CHARLES *and his* QUEEN, AGNES SOREL, BEAULIEU, GIAC, CHARTIER, CHABANNES, TRÉMOUILLE, OTTO CASTELLANI, JEAN DU VILLAGE, *and numerous others, enter.*

Charles. Thanks, gracious queen. Such welcome puts the favour
Of victory to the blush : . . she droops the head,

In homage to your praises. Fair Sorel!
Your counsel helped our arms, and now your smiles
Enhance their lustre. Valour in our Court,
May choose his mate of beauty.

Queen. Still away,
In chase of glory? May not I, nor Agnes,
Keep you from Harfleur?

Charles. Cœur shall answer you.
Behold him, there, with his right noble lady.

Sorel. Her brow at such a time might be less grave.

Giac. Mon Dieu! methinks it might!

Beaulieu. It were unseemly,
Even were she Juno's self.

CŒUR, MACÉE, *and* JEANNE DE VENDÔME *enter.*
CŒUR *presents* MACÉE *to* CHARLES.

Charles. A debt we owe,
Thus honoured.

Macée. Wherefore, sire? France in my bosom,
As in my husband's, beats, instead of heart.
His faithful wife is still your loyal subject,
And Heaven, I hear, has sanctioned your great cause.
A sainted maiden hath her mission proved,
In her success, to rescue injured France.

Charles. Meanst "La Pucelle"? fair dame.

Macée. Jeanne d'Arc, my liege.

Charles. Her inspiration, and your husband's gold,

Fair lady, have indeed redeemed the land.
Nor should we now forget to render thanks
For the great gifts, good hands, and better hearts,
That Providence has blessed our France withal.
La Belle Agnes comes in for much of praise:
Upon the altar of her country's cause,
She laid her store of wealth—her gems, her plate,
Setting ensample of like offerings
To others richer still.

Macée. Let me compete
With her a little. To your righteous cause
I give, what in my sense of all that's rich,
I hold to be a gift unparallelled—
My husband's love, his heart's entire devotion.

Charles. Spoke like a wife, indeed! In grace whereof,
Lead you the dance.

Macée. Nay, let Sorel. She is
Lighter of foot and heart.

Charles. Then, be it so;
Unless our Queen insist upon her right.

[*They withdraw into the suite of apartments. Dancers appear in the distance. Music.*

TRÉMOUILLE *enters, followed by* BEAULIEU, GIAC *and* CHABANNES.

Giac. Nay, Trémouille! your hand.

Trémouille. And why my hand?

Giac. The issues of the sport disliked you once,
Have been as stern as you would wish them be.
You have returned to us. We should be friends.

Trémouille. Yes, when we are equal. With our rhyming monarch,
You have the advantage now. I *am* returned!
What then? Your taunt was true: so are my blows!
Chabannes! bear witness I throw down the gauntlet.
This boaster may disdain to pick it up.

Chabannes. Right willingly.

Giac. St. Denis! not so willingly,
As I now take it up.

Enter Cœur, *followed by* Jean du Village, Otto, Macée *and* Jeanne Vendôme.—Macée *remains behind.*

Cœur. A feud? What, now,
When France needs both your helps? At such a time
And in the midst of our festivity
To forge a private quarrel? I forbid it!

Giac. With all my heart. I came to be his friend.
O ciel! his folly alters not my purpose.
If he will be my foe, amen to that!
Beaulieu, be witness, I accept his glove.
We'll to the dance!

[*Beaulieu and Giac pass in.*

Trémouille. Scorn for his scorn! Chabannes,
You saw my challenge.

Chabannes. Yes, and well approve it!

Cœur. Have I not said that I prohibit it?

Chabannes. Are you the king, or even something more,
That your imperative should carry it?
What hinders that our swords should tilt at you?

Cœur. Why, that which is far mightier than the sword—
Your honour! and your interest, sirs, beside!
My office, and the power that I could wield,
And will, if needful—which my word alone,
But whispered in my private steward's ear,
Could put in act, and force you to submission!

Chabannes. Is't possible? Mean you the debts I owe you
Make me your bondsman?

Trémouille. Nothing less he means.

Chabannes. Take my defiance, then!

Cœur. Rein in your wrath,
Chabannes! Because Giac and he are angry,
Should we, like schoolboys, fight?

Trémouille. Chabannes, away!
'Tis manhood lost to listen to his words!

[*Dragging out Chabannes.*

Cœur. Here, Otto! Jean! There must be no delay!

Now, mark me, Otto! You will buy the debt
Of me, that's owing by Chabannes. Good Jean!
He has my orders now to sell it you!
That done, arrest Chabannes! I must not be
As plaintiff in the suit: . . that you must be,
Good Otto! I have served you in my time;
Now, you serve me in this! I say, arrest him.
So, in this challenge, can he lend no aid
To Trémouille. For Trémouille himself,
I have, unknown to him, bought up a debt
He owed an armourer: . . that, too, is yours.
Him, then, as well arrest! No feud shall be
'Twixt him and Giac—I'm resolved on it!

Macée (*coming forward*). Cœur, list to me!

Cœur. You, here?

Macée. I have heard all!
The orders you have given Village remand!
The men you would coerce are *noble* men!
O, play not you the *merchant* creditor.
Is that a part to play at Court? A poor one!
Rather the *baron* play, by *conduct* proved
No less than *patent* made!

Cœur. Now, is this well?

Macée. Ay, Cœur! by all that's well! By what shall I
Adjure thee to be prudent—thou who hast been
In all thy dealings prudent? By thyself,

And by my jealousy of thy dear honour!
Let me speak loudly, Cœur, what men are whispering.
They say, thou art their benefactor, from
The king unto the peasant: this thou art;
But thou art also from the throne to the settle
The creditor of France! And worse—mark that!—
The envious court are debtors to thy bounty,
Mortgaged to thee for more than all are worth.
Wouldst grow a terror to thy friends and foes?
They say, thy benefits are gilded snares:
Hence now thy wealth's a danger to thyself,
Which, therefore, for thy safety, use as none.
Still art thou stubborn? Then, behold, dear Cœur,
Thy proud Macée doth bow the knee to earth; [*Kneels*
Here, at thy feet, she makes her humble suit,
And will not rise, till thou hast granted it!

Cœur. Rise, then! Persuaded, not convinced, . . I grant it. [*She rises.*

Jean! I revoke my orders. Castellani!
You've lost percentage by it? (*To Macée*) Bravely spoken;
Wisely, perhaps:—I am not assured of that!
To threat is dangerous: to act were safe.
The deed I have recalled—the words I cannot.
It had been better I'd ne'er spoken them,
Since, by your prohibition, they're no more.
'Tis thus, when women interfere with that

Should be the business of man alone.
Well, I forgive thee, wife. Thanks for that smile!
There's nought I'd not surrender, dear Macée,
To have you always smiling! Here's the king.

Re-enter CHARLES *and* COURT.

Charles. We may not keep festivity up late,
As if the wars were at an end. Full half
Our victory 's yet to come. To morrow morn,
Must see us march for Harfleur. Up betimes!
Till then, good night to all. Friend Cœur, a word!

III.

JUMIÈGES.

Scene—The Abbey Cloister.

KING CHARLES, CŒUR, JEAN DU VILLAGE *and* JEANNE DE VENDÔME.

Charles. How fares your patient, Jeanne?
Vendôme. Still weak, and weaker.
Charles. Now, by the Sanctities we worship here!
I rather had lost Harfleur, than mishap
Should come to Agnes. Perilous, say you?
Vendôme. Most perilous, assuredly, her case;
Perhaps, as certain mortal.
Charles. Saints in heaven!

And has it come to this? Cœur! be not silent!
Recount once more the process.

Cœur. Would the story
Were nothing but the fable, there an end.
But 'tis too sure a truth! From her retirement,
Called by her Majesty's commands to Court,
No sooner came Sorel, than, with that tact,
Which serves her to unthread all policies,
And ken what makes them, she detected there
Conspiracy, foul spider! spinning webs
Whose meshes were for us, but chief for thee.
Instant, with express sanction of the queen,
Hither to Jumièges, this Abbey here,
Flew Agnes, like an angel, sent to warn
Her monarch and her friend of coming doom.

Charles. O lovely prophet! loving, faithful Agnes!
How came she ill?

Cœur. Of that same love, I guess—
Of that same faith—to thee. That it should be so,
Even on this day, when we a banquet hold
For our success at Harfleur, grieves and irks me.
My wife is now attendant on her couch;
Already to her confessor has Agnes
Her soul unburthened of its malady,
Lamenting, in contrition most sincere;
Her fate might have been happier but for that!

Charles. Alas! What "might have been?" What
could be—was!

Cœur. You speak, as you were wounded by my words!

Charles. Stabbed to the heart!—nay, more, sir! to the soul,
O pang intolerable—immedicable—
My spirit's wounded! Cœur! why were you rich,
To make me so!—poor, I had not been tempted!
'Tis mammon bribes us with the means of guilt,
So are we sold to sin! Wealth—Power and Sin!
Of all the wine that most intoxicates,
Power soonest maddens—fierceliest, blindliest rages,
And murders or is murdered, as it may be!

Cœur. Slain by a smile, or tortured by a tear!
'Tis ever thus. France must be thought of now!
Jeanne, to your mistress. Bid her send us word
Of any change in Agnes. Please you, sire,
By this the captains wait us, in the camp.

[*Cœur conducts the King out.*

Village. A storm of passion now afflicts the king.
Nor has our master much less cause of grief.
The lady oft has by persuasion won,
What his cool judgment would in vain enforce,
And soothed to yielding mood the royal mind.

Vendôme. Her influence with the king was great, indeed;
And his with her:—'Tis therefore she is sick—
Most hopeless sick.

Village. What mean you, wench?

Vendôme. Who tends her?

Our master's wife? Note her distracted visage,
Whose jealous soul turned pale, at Agnes' coming,
On this so sudden errand. Now, Agnes is sick,
Mysterious sick—and groweth still more sick.

Village. Hush, wench! you speak in malice.

Vendôme. Malice? psha!

Wherefore should I bear malice? Once, indeed,
My master chid me for my mistress' sake,
Because to Agnes I betrayed her words,
Whence strife arose between them: then, he said,
I was ungrateful. Never so to him!
'Twere a good turn to free him from a shrew.
'Twere service he might thank me for, as much
As he expects me to thank him for his.

Village. Such speeches make you ugly as a witch,
Like some malignant crone, or beldam wild,
Swart imp, or dwarf misshapen. I have seen you
Conversing oft with Otto Castellani,
And other of my master's enemies,
The agents of Chabannes and Trémouille,
Who hate because they owe him love. His debtors,
They are devising means (I know it well)
Their debts to cancel even with his life.
I know you, Jeanne! You have a wicked heart!
Yes! hide your face for shame! Look not at me!

But go your ways! Do that which you should do—
Your duty to your mistress! There's your path.
Begone! Adieu! Heaven send you better thoughts.

Scene changes.—An Interior in the Abbey: An Oratory.

AGNES SOREL (*sleeping on a couch, a table or altar with a chalice by*) *and* MACÉE DE LÉODEPART.

Macée (*seated*). She has made confession like
Magdalene,
And been absolved. The priest, too, has departed
And left me to my office. Cœur! blind Cœur!
The sympathy between us, sure, is lost,
Or thou wouldst purposely offend my pride,
By dooming me to this. No confidence!
I understand him not. For her he cares—
But not for me. No!—nothing cares for me!
Her judgment—beauty; nothing like to them.
These must be cherished, failing him by me:
I am his proxy, here. Perchance, he loves her
Beyond what he would own to—not alone
For that her wit and wisdom serve him well,
But as he should love me. O agony!
Burn on, my heart!—spontaneously ignite,
And, like a willow, perish of combustion;
Disdaining more to weep, consume with fire!

Enter JEANNE DE VENDÔME.

Who's there? What, Jeanne? Why creep you so on me?

Vendôme. 'Tis at my lord's command, I should bring word

Of lady Agnes' health from you. He'd know

Each change that happens.

Macée. 'Twere incredible!

Tell him, she sleeps!

Vendôme. She is not, then, yet dead?

Macée. Dead? No! She rests with sleep, and not with death.

Little we know of sleep, but nought of death.

Nothing we know of death: too much of life,

In that we live, self-conscious—still the same.

Vendôme. There is no change, then?

Macée. No!—no change. The fool

Misunderstands my words. To her they seem

(I note it well, and it has long been so)

Strange and fantastic, as the ancient trunks

Of olive trees in an Italian grove,

Beheld by moonlight. Go, watch you the lady.

[*Jeanne de Vendôme goes to the couch.*

By the invincibility of death!

And by the everlastingness of love!

And the divineness of eternal truth!

I feel as though I could speak oracles:—

As I'd grown old at once, and should be held
As reverend as the millenial pine,
And tuneful as its music, heard at dusk.

Vendôme. She wakes!

Macée. Who shrieks so harshly?

Vendôme. No one shrieks.

Is it unwelcome news for you to hear,
That lady Agnes wakes?

Macée. Unwelcome? Yes!

All is unwelcome now, that would disturb
The dreamy slumber of my stagnant soul!

Sorel (waking). Vendôme! is't you? Rest has not strengthened me:
I need my cordial. Vendôme, give it me.
I grow still weaker—weak, I fear, to death!

Macée. What has she said?

Vendôme. She doth desire her potion.

Macée. 'Tis well! I will administer it myself.

Vendôme (going to the table or altar, and looking into the chalice). I'd spare you trouble. Tell me where to find it.

Macée. What asp is in your mind? What slimy worm,
That creeps into the features of your face,
And makes each line a poisonous reptile's lair?
Hence, insolence!—nor question me again!
Suspicion? ha!—straight bear my lord the tidings!

[*Exit Jeanne de Vendôme.*

(*Rising*) 'Tis more than her suggestion makes a void
Where I would fain find substance: space is empty!
Nay, space itself is gone!—Where is it hid?
In time? Where time? In thee, eternity!
Doomsday is every day, and, therefore, this.

Sorel. I'm left to languish.

Macée. I keep watch on you.

Sorel. Is't you, most noble lady? I had dreamed
'Twas Vendôme watching by me. It befits not
That you should have such labour.

Macée. It befits
A wife should be submissive.

Sorel. This reply
Comports not well with honour.

Macée. How is that?

Sorel. Thou art coerced to do what thou wouldst not.

Macée. No! willingly I do what now I do.

Sorel. Is't possible?

Macée. Ay, very possible;
And wherefore not? Art thou not worthiest?

Sorel. Worthiest? Alas!

Macée. Ay, worthiest.

Sorel. Alas!
'Tis well if my contrition cleanse my sin!

Macée. Can one so wise have sinned?

Sorel. Oh, most of all—
Against conviction, sinned!

Macée. She owns it, too !
Owns it to me—as if such wrong, to such
An one, had small significance for any ;
Herself the doer !—
Thou hast burthened conscience,
Which now afflicts thee for it. What was the sin,
That, in my presence, makes thee thus to writhe,
As I had part in it ? Why fall those tears,
A shower, upon my hand ? They make me pity,
Where else I meant to punish. If 'twill ease thee,
Unveil the mystery, that, perchance, is anguish
Only unspoken. Speak—in accents dear,
As native words heard in a foreign land !

Sorel. I've still revered you.

Macée. You revered me still ?
I've heard we best describe what we have lost,
And honour most what ne'er we hope to gain.
Our notions and our practice have so differed,
I should have thought else, you had spurned the spurner.
—If what you say be sooth, you're better fit
For death than I.

Sorel. Nay, you are every ready.
The virtuous always are so. For Vendôme
I am sorry her imprudence gave you cause
Of grievance, touching me.

Macée. She meant no harm.

Sorel. 'Tis not by meaning harm that harm is done;
The inconsiderate do the most.

Macée. 'Tis true.
We should think well, before we act at all.

Sorel. Poor Jeanne Vendôme has still to learn that lesson.

Macée. Let us, too, learn it—nor repent too late!

Sorel. Prithee, my cordial.

Macée (*partly exhibiting the phial, from her bosom*).
Here it is—anon!—
Were there a poison could annihilate,
Not only kill!—Nay, 'twere too terrible!—
Back to my bosom, asp!—I'll parley further!
Yet without fear, she'll not herself convict.
Thought hoarded long holds permanence for truth—
Hath time's vouch for it—truth's discoverer!
—(*Pausing, then solemnly*) Bethink yourself.—Is there no deeper wrong,
That you have done me? Answer, as your soul
Must shortly answer heaven's own Judge himself!

Sorel. Why am I thus adjured? A deeper wrong,
That I have done thee? Why, what deeper wrong?
We all may do more wrong than all we know,
From not reflecting duly. Where's the mortal
That has not erred? Yet tax me not with guilt,
Where I am only chargeable with error!
I *pray* thee, do not!

Macée. Pray not!—not to me!
Unless you make confession! Your denial.
Brings back on me that unrelenting mood,
Wherein I feel like some destroying angel,
Commissioned to stern duty. I was melting—
You make me granite. My heart grows, again,
As hard as Pharaoh's!

Sorel. O, beseech you, madam!
Press not upon the fallen! Kill me not
With words that fright me in this feeble state,
Whereat my innocence trembles.

Macée. Innocence!

Sorel. Then, ignorance. Not knowing my offence,
I feel as I were free.

Macée. You will not know it—
Albeit you shall!

Sorel. I cannot know of that
Whereof my sense is pure.

Macée. Now, patience.

Sorel. Pity!
Beware thou slanderest not my memory
With accusation false. When undeceived,
Idle remorse will do the work of fiends,
And, in his wanton mischief, make a sport
Of thy condemnèd soul!

Macée. O, wretched me!

Sorel. To know that thou wert author of a lie,

Were plague enough. But when to this we add,
That, spite of thee, the lie is still believed,
That rumour spreads, the echoes double it,
And still for ever it exists apart,
As it were consecrated unto hell!
O, such remorse as helplessness begets,
Is utter loss and absolute perdition!

Macée. What! thinkst thou I would condescend to this?

Or now have spoken without proof? Thinkst thou,
That thou hast been so cunning with Jacques Cœur,
That none your loves suspected? Am I blind,
Fond, credulous, that no mutation shewed
Itself to me, in my all-changèd lord?
So dull of soul, so non-intelligent,
That I should suffer not, yet suffer on,
Having no more perception than a stone?
Of me regardless, still regarding thee,
Thy name aye on his lips, and never mine;—
O, heaven and earth!—'twas orblike palpable!
Firm as the centre, perfect as the arch!

Sorel. What hear I now? Of me have you been jealous?

Had I known that, how had I pitied you!
Yet am I blessed in this,—weak as I am,
That with my dying words, I may be potent
To exorcise the fury, and set free

Your soul from worse than madness. Fear you not!
Your husband has been faithful. Love with me
Was an ambition. Not the man alone,
My heart might fill;—it was the crownèd king,
Whose nothing less than adoration I
Would fain secure—and did.

Macée. But of my husband?

Sorel. His wealth was needful to my royal lover,
And so by me was worshipt:—in his turn,
My aid was needful to the merchant's aims,
And so by him was sanctioned.

Macée. Nothing more?.

Sorel. Nor always sanctioned;—for of late has he
Rebuked me for too much magnificence,
As being of bad example to the king,
And to the court, whose rude extravagance,
In sooth, fell on himself, the creditor
Of all.

Macée. Did Cœur do this?

Sorel. With reason,—for
Hereof the danger grew that brought me here.
His benefactions to uphold this State,
Made foes—not friends. His debtors have conspired;
They seek his ruin, and his king's with his,
Unless he cast him off.

Macée. Had I known this
Before! O mockery! I knew it well!

But passion buried knowledge—therewith hope—
And near their grave I wander, spirit lost!

Sorel. Hope yet! You may do much. Once, you restrained
His anger wisely: . . Cœur himself confessed it.
And since that time indeed, did they but know it,
His enemies would know they need not fear.
The debts, so much to them, are nought to him:
And here, at court, the merchant he's no more,
But all the noble you would have him be.

Macée. What! thus has Cœur revered my counsel most,
When least he seemed to do so! Wonder starks me!
And thou—

Sorel. Weak—weak—and weary!

Macée. Swooning! Heaven!—The potion!
[*Disclosing the phial from her bosom.*
O most fatal substitute! [*Casting it away.*
Not that! not that! There is no other here,
And that were certain death! She's fainted! Well!
There's hope from nature—only fear in that!
—The terror of the dream that now hath past
Still shakes me! (*Sits.*) I must sit. My limbs so tremble,
'Twere vain to think of their supporting me.
Yet, hush! she, sure, is stirring. Grant, O God,

She may be now reviving! (*Rises.*) Thought of it
Renews my strength. Speak, Agnes!
Sorel. I am dying!
Farewell! I can no more! Exhausted—faint—
Pray for, and pardon me!
Macée. Another word!—
No! not an accent! Crept a cold wind to her,
That so she quivers? I'll wrap my mantle o'er her.
Ha! now she's still:—so very still, she breathes not.
Can she be dead? If so, 'tis terrible!
'Twere well that I should follow her—with means
At hand, I'm strongly tempted! No! I've work—
How much of work—to do! My lord's in peril—
How much through me I scarcely dare reflect!
She's surely dead! Let me becalm myself.
I am not guilty, though I might have been,
And cannot be too thankful; gracious heaven!
—Something's to do! Yes—first, I'll hence for help:
Thereafter to such meditations, as
May make me wise for action. Who's there? Help!

Scene changes.—The Abbey Cloister.

CHABANNES, TRÉMOUILLE *and* CASTELLANI.

Chabannes. Your news is welcome. You have thriven apace.
Giac—Beaulieu—both dead? Ye slew them both?

Trémouille. Let Cœur now take it as he list! He would not
The wont of chivalry should arbitrate.
Be he content with rougher means!

Chabannes. The manner?

Trémouille. To Issoudun, at night, we sped in secret,
Pierced to their chambers, took them from their beds,
Placed them, ere dressed, upon two wretched steeds,
And drove them to the fosse, and drowned them there.

Chabannes. Summary executioners, indeed!
'Tis well! Now for the King and Argentier.
Know, first, Agnes is dying.

Castellani. May be, dead.
Vendôme has her suspicions.

Trémouille. Her suspicions?

Castellani. The merchant's wife!

Trémouille. Ha! ha! I know it all.
A pact with you my friends. Vengeance on Cœur!
The upstart! But Macée's of noble blood!
'Twas needful to our plans she should be piqued
To desperate issues. Whatsoe'er her guilt,
She is acquitted. Let the punishment
On him alone descend! In this be just.

Chabannes. Content! (*To Castellani*) Time is with you to meet Vendôme.

At once we visit Agnes. (*To Trémouille*) Fare you well! [*Exeunt Chabannes and Castellani.*

Trémouille (*alone*). I have wrought it, then to this. When first I dared
To whisper danger, she disdained the thought;
But she has heard it since from other lips,
Which mine have tutored. Time's a wizard; makes,
From smallest seed, things giant-like to teem
By gradual change. Be absent but awhile,
When we return—lo, what we left a mite
Has grown a monster. Wonderful! she comes—
She sees me, and approaches. On her brow
A darkness lowers, yet luridly lit up,
As something there were flashing in her eyes,
Wherewith the brain was burning.

Enter MACÉE.

Macée (*aside*). Tempter!—Slanderer!

Trémouille. Fair greeting, gentle dame.

Macée. Gentle, forsooth—
But for a certain sorrow and remorse,
I might be gentle, now my mind is free
From that most cruel yoke, which thou, and others,
Had burthened it withal.

Trémouille. What yoke, fair lady?

Macée. Why dost thou question me, who wert the first

So to corrupt the judgment of my sense,
That whatsoever was most innocent,
In Cœur, still seemed more cunning? Not again
Can I be tempted, now, or he be slandered!

Trémouille. You are, then, a happy wife?

Macée. I might have been—
What nôw may be I doubt. I will not doubt!
But welcome faith reborn, and welcome hope,
Welcome serenest thoughts, and that high love
Which blesses whom it visits! Welcome home
Ye sacred feelings, human sympathies,
The heart's religion, the soul's confidence,
The intuitions and the sentiments,
That hovering wait upon fidelity,
As she descends to earth! O welcome truth,
Thus finding thee, I find myself again.
The mourned-for exile is at length returned.

Trémouille. A sudden change, indeed!

Macée. Deride me not!
But rather think how thou mayst prudently
Atonement make to Cœur, ere I betray
Thy baseness to him—think of it, betimes!
Both for thyself and those who plot with thee;—
'Twere better done at once

Trémouille. Such arrogance!

Macée. Thou standst within his danger, . . if his wrath

Be wakened, as it will be.' Take good heed,
Lest his resentment kindle.
Trémouille. What do ye mean?
Macée. Thou hast defamed the dead!—and wronged
the living!
Hence, fear to sleep; thou shalt be haunted for it.
Dare scarce to breathe, for every word of thine
Shall seem defiance and provoke revenge.
Be humble, or my tongue shall ring a peal
Fatal as thunder.
Trémouille. To yourself or me?
Where is your prudence . . reason . . self-respect?
You better were a man! Make terms with thee?
First, let me know the cause? Am I less brave,
Than I was yesterday, or thou less weak?
If 't please you to interpret, be it so;
If not, to guess your mystery will content me!
Macée. Then learn, Agnes is dead.
Trémouille. No need to learn—
I knew so, without teaching.
Macée. Knew you, too,
What of my Cœur she spake, and how her words,
Her dying words, acquitted him of all
You charged him with? Nay—now I come to terms—
Will bribe you, if a man, to terms of peace.
You have conspired against him, in your fears—
(Would passion had not shut me from his counsel!

But *she* was of it, knew his every purpose.)
The debts ye owe him, all are gifts to you,
And every courtier else who is his debtor.
Thus Cœur forestalls your plots and grants their issue.
Trémouille. Were you not blinded so with ignorance,
You'd seen this were an insult, worse than all.
Wouldst have us grateful?
Macée. If ye would be noble.
Trémouille. Would be! We are! 'Tis ours to give, not his.
The privilege we inherit he usurps,
And so must fall!
Macée. Audacious! Fall? You dare.
Trémouille. Be an historian, though perhaps no prophet.
If I mistake not, here arrives my witness.

Enter CASTELLANI.

Nay, start not, Castellani! There's Macée—
'Tis fit she hear what you would utter. Speak!
But as I know the news must pain her much,
And she will need sincerest pity, grant me
To state beforehand, much as she may doubt it,
We are her friends, and vow to help her through
The straits of sudden peril. Now, say on
Macée. What can have happened? Here stand I, like Death.

Castellani. Chabannes went hence to visit Agnes, led
By Jeanne Vendôme, he sought the Abbey-chamber.
Alone, the lady rested on her couch,
That was her bier: . . for she indeed was dead—
Unwatched, untended; but beside her lay
A phial, such as once her potion held,
But which, for sundry reasons, raised suspicion.
Chabannes seized on it, suddenly unsealed it,
And poured the liquid down a mastiff's throat,
The watch-dog of the Abbey;—the poor brute
Died on the instant.

Macée. Not more mortal, that,
Than is thy tale to me!

Trémouille. You know, then, of the draught?

Macée. I scorn to lie. I do.

Trémouille. Did Agnes taste it?

Macée. Agnes did not: her death was uncompelled.

Trémouille. Go on. The sequel?

Castellani. Forth Chabannes and I
Straight went to seek the King, at banquet with
His Argentier. We found them not o'er merry:
A gloom was on the monarch, and the merchant
Anxiety o'ermastered. When we entered,
"Agnes is dead!" he cried, *expectantly.*

Macée. But in the course of nature—nothing more.

Castellani. It might be so; but it *seemed* otherwise.
Chabannes then told his tale, produced his proofs,

Held up the phial in the sight of all,
While pale Vendôme confessed her doubts and fears.
Macée. Regarding me!
Castellani. Ay, madame. But Chabannes
Soon brought her to a pause. "'Twas Cœur," he said,
"Who needed Agnes' absence; and had charged
His wife with deadly task and instrument,
For his advantage; that he might enjoy
That influence, undivided, o'er the king,
Which erst he shared with Agnes."
Macée. But the king
Believed not the false charge?
Castellani. Indeed, he did.
Conviction flashed across him, ere reflexion.
A gush of tears relieved him; then, exclaiming,
"O matchless traitor!" he the chamber fled.
Macée. What then, did Cœur?
Castellani. Surprised; enforced, surrendered
To capture.
Macée. What! dared they profane his person?
Castellani. The accused must yield to legal violence
Macee. The crime of their unthankfulness ascend
And drag the unwilling justice down. So, so!
'Tis true, that Cœur has fallen! Yet, Trémouille,
Think not we're at thy mercy. No! I can
Clear him by my confession.
Trémouille. Humph! You can

Convict yourself—but, as to clearing him,
All you can say will strengthen proof against him.
For a wife's faults the law still mulcts the husband.
Macée. I know—I know. Still will I not despair.
"Hope yet!" the dying said. "You can do much!"
I will do all!—nay, more than can be done!
Impossibility shall be a phrase,
A vain articulation of the air,
That has no potence in the life of things.
I *will* save Cœur—'tis well that I should perish!
To his redemption from this cursèd charge,
I do devote myself—my life—my fame—
Ay, honour's self, a sacrifice for him!
Trémouille. This resolution we must needs approve.
You know that Otto was your husband's friend,
And said I not, anticipant of this,
I had resolved on serving you? My reasons
Are private, yet most cogent. We will help you.
(*Aside to Castellani*) By humouring we may control
her mood!
Macée. What shall I do?
Castellani. Vendôme's hard by. Till she's
Consulted with, the merits are not known:
What's to be done? What not? Moreover, Cœur
Left her a message to be told to you.
Macée. That word has charmed me forward. Sirs,
conduct me!
Trémouille. We're glad you yield to counsel.

Macée. Not to your's.
The wife, once rebel, now obeys her lord's.

Scene changes.—Palatial Interior.

CŒUR, CHABANNES *and* JEANNE DE VILLAGE, Officers *guarding* CŒUR.

Cœur. Wait yet a little. Chartier soon will bring
His answer.

Enter ALAIN CHARTIER.

Will King Charles grant me a hearing?

Chartier. He will not, worthy Cœur. An apathy
Has seized upon him with this sudden grief,
Which will not be disturbed.

Cœur. Ah, me! Of late,
This weary mood, this listlessness of soul,
Has grown upon him daily more and more.
'Twas born with him. Awhile the war's excitement
Held in suspense the melancholy fiend;
Then came reaction—and his sloth increases.
For you, Chabannes! I think you've been ungrateful:
Yet will I not rebuke you with my words.
Rather my silence and my patience teach you
What wrong from you I suffer. Chartier,
My wife will doubtless seek me. Keep her back
Until to-morrow. I'm angry with her now,

And would not see her, till I am better tempered.
I've bid Vendôme do this, and now bid you.

Chartier. I will obey!

Cœur. You'll see me, too, to-morrow.
'Till then, dear friend, adieu! My faithful steward,
Good Jean! attend me to my prison gates,
And take my last commands.

Chartier (*alone*). Adieu, great soul!
His resignation so exemplary
Would soften hearts of marble. His foes have none,
No hearts at all, whether of flesh or stone.
—Here comes his raving wife.

Enter MACÉE *and* JEANNE DE VENDÔME.

Macée. Refuse to see me!
Deny himself to me?—expel me from him.
—To-morrow?—what's to-morrow? Still a debtor,
To-day still puts off duty till to-morrow;—
'Tis not Cœur's wont thus to procrastinate,
And I will not believe it, though you swear so.
It is a thoughtless falsehood, an excuse
To save yourself some trouble. I have pardoned,
On your repentance, many a fault to you;
And now this last, so big with fearful issue,
Growing from your surmises. Add not to it.
But, by confession, cheer me with the truth,
That Cœur forthwith would have me visit him.

Vendôme. Madame, indeed, I should be false to say so.

Macée. Then all is false and contradictory.
The beatings of the heart, the pulse of life,
Ancient authority, and the dread oracles
That, from ancestral urns, examples teach,
Together with the starry dance in heaven,
Which men have thought to be wise harmony ;
All these be discords, like the clank of chains!
Cœur cast me off? A wife so true as I,
Whose very error shewed how much she loved him.
This is the mocking garland to my grief,
A wreath of nettles but to sting my brows!

Chartier. Madame, 'tis true ; Cœur charged on me the same.

Macée. Thou, Chartier!—whose lips are tuned to music,
Whose numbers grow voluptuous in their sweetness;—
What thou, O poet!—By thy cunning, swear,
If this be theme for lyric ecstasy?
O, I shall be an argument for song,
Perhaps, for satire and the scurril jest?
Hast thou no elegy on ruined hope,
That will befit the state of my despair?
Come, solemnize therein the wretched wife,
Who, by too much of love, made desolate
Herself and him she loved! Or are these sufferings,
Beyond experience as I think they be,

Too little pleasing for the pomp of verse?
There is a penance of the human heart,
Imagination never yet conceived;
A state whereto poetic visitant
Has ne'er descended, to set free the thought,
Imprisoned in its self-created Hell!
So leave me to that thought. All else be dumb!

Chartier. See the king's chamber opens!

Macée. Ha! the king!
Cœur made him king. If he be king indeed,
He'll not be thankless. Still his love for Agnes—
I'm desperate!—and, as the wife of Cœur,
Were she the queen, I were a match for her,
And might command where yet I'll humbly sue!

[*Goes out hastily.*

Enter TRÉMOUILLE.

Chartier. You come from the king's chamber?

Trémouille. Sir, I do.

Chartier. Macée has entered?

Trémouille. Sir, she has. With him,
There let her plead, since she must plead in vain.
Grief so has stunned his sense, that nought he hears
Nought answers;—he is but the log i' th' fable!
'Tis *we* now reign; not he, no more than Cœur!
I seek Chabannes!

Chartier. We follow *her*. Come on!

IV.

Marseilles and Beaucaire.

Scene—An Apartment.

Jeanne de Vendôme (*seated*). What, if I say 'twas
not from thanklessness,
But thoughtlessness, I wronged the merchant Cœur?
To think not, is to thank not. Thought is memory
Of the perpetual gifts that Time leaves with us.
Yet thought I, too;—but, it would seem, not well.
It is an art to think, as we should think;
And to think well—is to think well of all,
And without doubt—of nature, man, or God.
Yet are the enemies of Cœur not men?
And is not nature in their bosom human?
Howbeit the Church—Heaven's representative,
Has still defended Cœur, and censured them.
Yet there were prelates 'mongst his debtors, too;
Who were not the least rancorous! O this skein
Unravels not itself for such as I
—When comes Village? 'Tis past the day, the hour,
Announced hereby—(*showing a letter*)—for his return
[*A bell sounds without.*
Ha! sure,
'Tis he—the honest steward! Here he is! [*Rising*

Enter JEAN DU VILLAGE.

Welcome, Village!

Village. You're here, to welcome me?
I am glad of that, at least.

Vendôme. What fear had you,
Here, in Marseilles, protected as we are
By good King René?

Village. Why—Provençe——. No more!
I'll tell you, by and bye. First, tell you me,
What, since I parted, chanced with Cœur? Distinctly!
Nor care for repetition: . . . for I seek
To put some hints together, so to find
Where now they hide him?

Vendôme (*greatly alarmed*). Know you not? Good Heaven!
Macée will, sure, go mad when hearing this!

Village. We must be calm. I'll help you to begin.
—At his desire, Cœur's last commands received,
Ere he was dungeoned, I departed straight
For Languedoc, commissioned in his name,
There to take charge of stores of merchandize
And vessels, which the harpies of the law,
Their master absent, else had plundered. This
I did. Not a bale 'scaped into their hands!
Now—tell your story.

Vendôme. All of it I cannot.
For to imprison me, as well as Cœur,

'Twas needful held, on charge of Agnes' death.
Whereof acquitting him, on my *amende*,
Demanded and conceded, they released me:
But to my utter wonder did not him.
Village. Let's see!—let's see! I've correspondence, here,
Upon that point—(*seats himself at table, and takes out papers*)—the strangest point of all;
That most illegal of all stratagems.
Something may come of that. Yes, Jeanne Vendôme!
They wanted but excusé for capturing him;
Which, having done, they added to that charge
A thousand accusations, as more reasons
For holding him still thralled. I have them, here.
"He had sent armour to the Saracens,
Been guilty of extortion"—and so forth—
Which "the Grand Council should investigate!"
So held they him confined, in Taillebourg,
Transported thence to Lusignan, Maillé,
And Tours;—thence whither I not know! One failed,
Another—still they charged him with new crimes;
Leze majesté, force and imprisonment,
Public and private, without law in both.
It had been vain, had Cœur pled to the facts;
He therefore sought for refuge in the Church,
Whereof he was a tonsured clerk, and pled

His order's privilege. Her bishops urged it;
His impious judges heeded not their voice,
Nay, after months of false imprisonment,
Sought to subdue their victim by the question.

Vendôme. Tortures for him—for me, and for Macée!
How she survived that anguish I can think not:
'Twas madness too sublime for life to hold!
And she has since been rather like the dead
Than living. Anon, came the last disgrace;
When Cœur, condemned as worthy death, but pardoned
Of the king's grace, . . his treasures confiscate,
Was doomed, without or chaperon or girdle,
In sign he was deprived of all his goods,
To suffer penance in the public eye;
The which he did, as purchase for his life,
Bare life alone—and not his liberty!—

Village. And this was royal gratitude! O Charles!
Charles, king of France! thou needest honest hearts,
Even now, to guard thee from the Dauphin's aims;
Yet, by such foul ingratitude as this,
Thou'dst lose them all! But, soft! Here comes the mourner,
With Chartier, whom I met upon the threshold.

MACÉE *and* CHARTIER *enter.*

Macée. Gone from Tours?—taken thence? You know not whither?

Chartier. Even so.

Village. I, too, have vainly sought.

Macée. You?—You?

Then is the world as good as searched in vain!
Nor need I argument for great despair,
But find it in thy honesty writ large!

Village. Still have I faith in Providence and Virtue.

Macée. Think you, thereon I've never thought? Then, know,
I number, 'mong my faults and errors, this:—
That, ignorant and presumptuous, I still urged
More holy motives, than were warranted
By the world's market, on my husband, Cœur;
Thinking that Merit ruled, not Destiny;
Deeming the offspring of his own caprice,
What were the Titan progeny of Time.
The power he wielded was of recent growth,
And had to combat ancient enmities,
Which it must conquer, or be conquered by,
And by his martyrdom will conquer yet.
Now, would I take defiant attitude,
And let blind Fate do what it list with me,
Using my natural force to stead myself,
Resenting the injustice, whosesoe'er,
That mocks us with the shows of liberty,
And cheats us with illusions into folly,

Which needs must be, whether we act or no,
Till death forecloses on our mortgaged hopes,
And banquets bravely on our bankrupt hearts!
Village. These words offend religion.
Macée. May be. Earth!
Were she a ship that blasphemy might sink!
Who pilots her? What captains walk her deck,
That have not merited anathema?
Is't Charles of France? My curse on him was wordless!
Not whispered!—the suggestion of my thought
Was charged, yet as a cloud, and burst in silence!
The miracle was signal. Puppet Charles!
—My lord was king, not he: the puppet said.
The jealous puppet smote its maker's pride!
Then, was the puppet king? Vile, thankless slave!
The slave of slaves more thankless and more vile!
His arm was broken with the blow he dealt!
And now the Dauphin strikes his pate across,
With reckless insolence, in wanton sport!
Chartier. True, madam! 'Tis not he that acts, but they—
'Tis not his act, the act that brought me here.
Macée. We must remove? Nay, let me pause on that!
From the false Government of France, you tell me,
A requisition most peremptory
Has reached king René, to withdraw his sanction

For our remaining here ; . . and the Provençal,
Too weak for the French court, must hunt us forth.
Where would they banish us? Where have they banished
Him, for whose sake, they make us exiles, too?
I'll be no more deceived, but rest at once
On that which tramples hope! My Cœur's an exile!
An exile from the world! Him whom they prisoned,
Condemned unjustly, they've unjustly slain!

Village. Nay, madam! We've no warrant to say that.

Macée. Warrant! there's none for aught that we can say,
But in our power to say it! Where's the warrant,
For what, we know, they've done? What warrant need they,
For what, we know, they may do? I have taken
Counsel of wisdom, and am bid—"Despair!"
By voices heard in Heaven . . among them, his:
My Cœur speaks to me from his mansion there!
There is an inspiration in the tone,
Which can not be mistaken! [*She sits.*
Here I'll sit!
Famine, my guest! I love the specialty
Of sunken cheeks, eyes rayless, bloodless veins,
Of marrowless bones and juiceless ligatures,
Until the skeleton scarce holds together.

So long I've thought thereon, I am fascinate—
I grow, with passionate love, into the image,
And will from food and drink abstain, until
This failing body free me to behold
His form, as thus I hearken to his voice,
That sweetly now invites me, haste to meet him!

Chartier. O fearsome phrensy, madam!

Macée. No word more!

Village (*to Jeanne de Vendôme*). It must not be!
'Twas what I had to say—
The thing that Chartier has informed her of—
That we are hunted hence. I knew not how
To say it! But this mood! It must not be!

Jeanne. If she delays, thus obstinate, the hounds,
That hence should hunt us, will be here!

Chartier. Anon.
Trust in my function. In such cases, learn,
The bard is a physician. Go, make ready
For your departure. Not a breath! [*Exeunt.*
Meanwhile,
I'm left to terror I'd not have them share,
And would inspire the hope I cannot feel.
[*He contemplates Macée for some time, then gently approaches her.*
Madame!— [*She gives him no answer.*
For shame!— [*No recognition.*
Now, by the generous pride

Of the Léodeparts!—Still no response!
Macée!—or Cœur! Not even that loved name!
What invocation, else? Ha! I hear footsteps!
This must not be! Who're they that enter now?
I fear some officers from René's court?

Enter GUILLAUME GYMART *and* GAILLARDET.

—Whom seek ye, sirs?

Gymart. Jean du Village, the steward,
Late of the Merchant Cœur.

Chartier. Ay, so I feared!
Wait yet . . for see where sits the wife of Cœur,
Fixed in the horror of a hopeless grief,
We will depart anon.

Gaillardet. Depart! I think, sir,
You are the poet Chartier? Know us, then,
We be two factors, late from Bourges, of Cœur.

Chartier. Pri'thee, your pardon! Bring ye news of Cœur?

Gymart (*presenting tablets*). Here, on these tablets, have we writings by him.

Chartier. In his own hand? Is Cœur alive?

Gaillardet. He was
When last we left him.

Chartier. At Tours?

Gaillardet. No, at Beaucaire.

Chartier. Cœur lives! Here is the proof! Wake up, Macée!

Here, take his tablets in thy hands! Their touch,
Having been felt by him, may thus inform thee,
(Such sympathies are vouched for), that he lives.
Cœur lives! Read—read what he has writ!

Macée (*slowly*). It thrills!
Something would make me feel! Disturb me not!
The sun has died:—who'd live in darkness? O!
Would I had not survived!

Chartier. 'Tis daylight still!
Hope's in the world! Cœur lives! Read—read, I say,
His tablet's in thy hands.

Macée (*in a low tone*). Where are my eyes?
Can, then, my fingers see? (*Shrieking*) These? Ha!
From Cœur?—
You said, from Cœur?

Chartier. His own handwriting.

Macée. 'Tis!
It is! It is! O, ne'er was scripture dearer.
Yet, he is dead—and these are sent from heaven,
By you, his angels.

Chartier (*to Gai. and Gymart*). Step aside, awhile;
And give her time for judgment.

Macée (*laughing hysterically*). Ha! ha! ha!
[*She kisses the tablets, and then bursts into a flood of tears.*

Chartier. I pray thee, read the tablets.

Macée. Wait!—I will! [*Reads.*

"Beaucaire." Describe what quarter of the skies,
Beaucaire emparadises. More! (*Reads*) "The Convent
Of Cordeliers." That's earthy. Pah! (*Reads*) "The King."
What King? "King Charles." It is King Charles of France.
Ne'er thought I more to hear his name with joy,
Or syllable it myself but with a curse!—
(*Reads*) "Under his safeguard, prisoner at large;
"Yet for the love of God and love of man,
"Let not thy imprisoned master, faithful friend,
"Pine in his bonds. Achieve his liberty!"
Signed "Cœur." 'Tis for Village. 'Tis not for me!
Yet why should this rebuke me? Cœur is living.
That is enough for me—should be enough!
If love be dead in him, he's dead to love.
O, cankerous doubt, that withers love's true rose!
Come, famine! then.

Chartier. Nay, this is wilful, lady.
Cœur's motives are apparent. He is guarded
With such strict charge, though in a convent, lady
(As now I hear from these two honest factors),
'Twill need most perilous enterprise to free him.

Macée. There's comfort in your news. Thanks, gentlemen!
I'm glad of it. Fain would I venture death!
Look, here's another tablet. (*Reads*) "Son," he calls him—

Entreating "instant action"—for, "I learn
"My death is meditated by my foes."
—I knew 'twas so—that meditated death
Cœur since has suffered; and again I yield,
Myself to desolation.

Chartier. Wife of Cœur!
"Hope yet—thou canst do much!"

Macée (*abstractedly*). So Agnes said—
The dying prophet said it!

Chartier. Where's the courage
That once upheld thee in thy great resolve,
To save him, spite all loss? Let not despair
Baffle prophetic instinct—grant the danger,
How imminent soever; speed may snatch
The expected victim from the threatened snare.

Macée (*recovering*). And, not the less for my despair will I
Do this, and more—armed now for either issue.
Let me see Cœur I would win back his love,
His love I must win back; or myself perish,
Though the work prosper which I go to do.
Grant, heaven! some difficulty to surmount!
O, let it be the wager of my life!
I'll make such large atonement for my fault,
Extreme devotion shall regain his love.
(*Calling*) Village! Vendôme!—Come, we must speed away.

I am as swift, now, in my new desire,
As I of late was tardy! Gentlemen,
We needs must leave Marseilles within an hour,
But secretly, or we shall ne'er escape.
We'll join our friends within. My mind grows clear.
Take comfort, heart! Away with doubt or fear!

Scene changes.—Exterior Collonade. Convent of the Cordeliers. Midnight. Matin music heard from the Chapel.

MATHIEU D'ECOLE, DUCLERC *and* SIMONET *enter.*

Mathieu D'Ecole. Keep ye good watch. Be ye not too secure.
Ye have no common prisoner. Merchant Cœur
Has head, and hands: is apt, and wise, and brave.
He has had visitors.
Duclerc. A brother or twain
Of our own Order, from the opposite town
Of Tarascon—no more.
Mathieu D'Ecole. They should be faithful.
Simonet. Are, doubtless. Easier to escape, Jacques Cœur
Would find it, from a dungeon, than Beaucaire.
'Tis not alone the Convent's guarded strictly;
The town is circled in by barrier-walls,

Prohibiting attempt with silent scorn.
Then there's the Rhone to cross. All these are bars
Most formidable.

Mathieu D'Ecole. I am satisfied.

Simonet. The matins now are over, and Cœur comes forth
For his accustomed meditation. We
Respect his privacy.

Mathieu D'Ecole. At such an hour,
The sleeping world has nought to send us fear.
Be vigilant.

Duclerc and Simonet. We shall observe your orders.

[*Exeunt at different sides.*

Enter JACQUES CŒUR, *alone.*

Cœur. Were I not strong in my integrity,
Inconstant fortune! thou hadst broken me
Upon thy treacherous wheel. O, thou hadst vaunted,
How Cœur, in slavish bonds, thy triumph graced.
But now, roll on thy chariot; still erect
I walk apart, unconquered, unsubdued.
The pious service of this midnight hour
Sheds o'er my soul a customary peace,
By repetition but more soothing made.
And I to ye can upward look, O stars!
Oblivious of ungrateful injury;

Faith broken, lawless trial, doom unjust,
And heartless cruelty sanctioned with the name
Of royal privilege and grace unbought,
The terrible compassions of the proud.
One sorrow yet affiicts me, that, Macée !—
That thou, Madonna of this living shrine,—
That thou shouldst of this temple, where alone
Thou wert adored, conceive so wrongfully
And gender mischief in thy jealous soul ;
This pierces—this torments—this maddens me !
Soft, footsteps !

Enter MACÉE, *disguised as a Cordelier.*

Ha ! perhaps the friendly monk
To whom, on his last visit, I confided
My tablets to Village. That honest name
The breath makes odorous that names it kindly.

Macée. I never deemed that I should shrink away
Into myself, and dread his near approach —
Thus trembling !

Cœur. Welcome, monk ! Pray, do I know you ?
Are you from Tarascon ?

Macée. From Tarascon

Cœur. That voice ! 'Twas strangely like ! From Tarascon !
Instinct of love ! I pierce through her disguise ;
But love offended mails itself in steel—

No rock so hard—so sharp! What wouldst thou say?

Macée. Does he not know—will he not know—my voice?

Cœur (*going*). Thou art not the Cordelier I thought I knew?

I thank thee, monk! I must beware espial.

Macée (*rushing up to him*). Wouldst thou go hence? Dear Cœur! this must not be.

Macée implores thee!

Cœur (*coldly*). Wherefore seekst thou me?

Macée. Whom should I seek but thee? Whom should the soul

Seek but its God? Whom should Macée, but Cœur?

Cœur. Macée! Here, kneeling?—weeping? Stand thou up!

I have been humbled, and have drunk more tears
Than I have shed. Therefore, stand up, Macée,
Nor act the passion of a Niobe,
Unless, like her, astonied; jealous heaven,
Author alone of thy calamity!

Macée. I've so charged heaven; . . but, then, thou wert not by

To check the impious thought.

Cœur. I check thy thought?—

I know not when such mastery was mine.

Macée. Thine? Ever, Cœur!

Cœur. Most strangely manifest!
In ever thinking, doing, what thou wouldst,
Thy husband's ruler in his prosperous hour,
And his main grief in this adversity.

Macée. To heaven, and thee, I would acknowledge all—
Be thou like that: . . absolve me from my sin!
Thou wert a man, whose pardon still outran
Offences, like the herald of good powers,
On whose impassive essences serene
No stain may fix, and no dishonour come.
Unhappy me, the sole exception made!

Cœur. Thou knowst the cause?

Macée. I do. Not to extenuate
The error of my love—for such it was—
(Jealousies are to love as dreams to sleep)
Nor tax thee with neglect—for none was thine—
(Still rapt in trance broods creant enterprise)—
I dare avouch, there ne'er was in my soul
An impulse thou wert not the mover of
Thy profit—credit—glory—pleasure—power—
These were my inspirations; . . these the stars
That shone upon me in my solitude;
Whilst thou abroad wert doing, in the field
Of life, the battle that the brave must dare,
Even though they perish. These are thoughts of thine;

They lived with me even when estrangement cast
Its casual shadows 'twixt two anxious hearts,
Perplexed with high responsibilities.
And what if such were vexed, and one was wrecked,
Judgment thrown overboard, and the poor barque
Left to the mercy of the waves and winds.
Is Cœur less merciful than they have proved,
And the spent swimmer would forbid the shore?

Cœur. 'Tis music such as this, the seas have solaced,
When they were angry.

Macée. Would my Cœur deny,
When on the beach the breathless swimmer sank,
The wine of comfort to the penitent?

Cœur. I would not, and I will not! Dear Macée,
Close to my heart! I, too, have been to blame!
A faithful heart, like thine, should have been trusted;
And what might not be so, been left undone.
'Twas a plain guide, but the trim voyager
Would not consult it; . . So the vessel stranded!

Macée. But I am vowed for its salvation, Cœur!

Cœur. Thou, fond Macée? We'll talk less wildly now.
Yet, saidst thou not, thou camest from Tarascon?

Macée. Time wears: I'll tell thee all, without a pause!
There are no listeners?

Cœur. None.

Macée. At Tarascon

Thy friends assemble, led by Jean Village ;
The Convent of the Cordeliers his lodging ;
With him Gymart and Gillardet, assisted
By a good score or two of armèd men,
Soldiers in the late wars. At Tour de Bouc,
A galley of thy own lies ready ; then
At Nice another, which, with wind to serve,
Will Pisa reach in safety : thence to Rome,
Where good Pope Nicholas his palace gates
Throws wide, for thy reception.

Cœur. Cheering news !
But how reach Tarascon ?

Macée. A hirèd boat
Awaits thee, on the Rhone. The night's auspicious ;
Caution . . and silence . . and the river's crossed.

Cœur. Impossible ! The town is fenced with walls.

Macée. Time has in one commenced a breach, which man
Is even now enlarging, easy task,
To let thee through.

Cœur. Yet still impossible !
At every avenue, by day and night,
The Monks kept sentinel. I may not pass
The Convent's bounds.

Macée. They may be bribed, perchance.

Cœur. I know them well, an incorruptible
And pious brotherhood. There is no hope !

Macée. "Hope yet," said dying Agnes. By that name,
I'll charm you yet to listen. Much to do
Lies in my power—in mine, dear Cœur! And all,
Nay, more than can be, I have sworn to do,
By spiritual might! Prophetic words
Were those she uttered. Be in me fulfilled
Their purport; here devoted, lo, I stand
For thy deliverance, Cœur; called to the work
By sacred oracle, ordained, resolved!

Cœur. What wonder, now, Macée? Thou art not phrenzied?

Macée. List further, and then judge. I am prepared
For what I came to do. Beneath this habit
Lo, here my woman's gear. This habit take;
And, in return, give me thy merchant's robe;
In this same hood conceal thy visage, Cœur!
And give me, for my brows, thy turban, Cœur!

[*Macée makes the exchange, while speaking:—he passively and abstractedly submits.*

Here will I stay. The distant sentinel
Will mark me in the moonlight, sitting here,
And thence have no suspicion. Meanwhile, thou,
In this monk's garb, will pass securely by.
'Twill cost thee but a "Benedicite!"

Cœur. But thee thy life! The Convent's laws are strict.

Morn comes—thou are detected: this disguise
Serving for proof, not shelter. No, Macée!
I cannot do it.

Macée. It is done without thee.
Thou seemst to know not the exchange is made.
Behold, thou art the monk, the merchant I.

Cœur. Surprise had, surely, reft me of my functions.
—Yet here stay I!

Macée. And I—and thus attired!
Hence, when discovered, they'll imprison both;
And, for this cause, so thy confinement straighten,
That thy resuscitate love for me again
Will perish, when thou thinkst upon the fault,
This new one I've trangressed in; like the rest,
The child of a deep love, that no divorce
Admits but death. Love and my life are one!

Cœur. Be it even so. I shall not blame Macée.

Macée. Thou wilt—thou must! I will not peril it.
Or if thou do not, I am resolute
To shut myself from pardon utterly.
My own, and yours, and earth's, and Heaven's!—gaze on!
I am become a mystery to myself,

And capable of whatso most appals
Good men and angels! I will do the deed,
Shall make my soul an outcast! To my wish,
Therefore, at once surrender! Morn soon dawns,
And all this peril hastens. Yield at once!

Cœur. Still thy imperative nature must prevail.

Macée. Embrace me! Now, away!

Cœur. Adieu! adieu!

Yet still I turn me back, in hope to soothe thee.
Thou lookest bravely in my turban, wife!
No, by this starlight, thou art beautiful.
I thank the moon for shining out so fair.
By heaven! I will not leave thee to this peril!
Give me again my garments! I will have them!

Macée. I will not quit this gear, except by force;
Which, if thou use, I'll sudden scream so loud,
The Convent cells shall echo with my cry.

Cœur. Thy will is dominant—thy mien commanding—
Thou art imperial as imperious.
I'm awed and spell-bound! I submit, constrained.
To obey thee, is to please thee. Well, I go.
And be the saints thy guardians!

Macée. Hence! The Monk,
Thy guard, impatient of our conference, comes.
Away, or all is lost!

Cœur. Adieu! adieu!

[*Macée sinks upon a seat.*

V.

BEAUCAIRE.

Scene—Interior of Convent Chapel. Altar illuminated.

MACÉE *discovered by the altar-rail.*

Macée. I would my spirit should continue hushed,
Grief quenched by the Immortal Sacrifice
Which makes of none account all mortal loss.
From midnight to the morn I matin keep,
In silence, which, in solemn music, late
Ascended high, and on the wing of sound
Transported me to heaven: . . no prisoner, then;
And now, if one, a temple, lo! my prison;
And its celestial presences are set
For comforters to those whom penance bows,
The best physicians to the broken heart,
That by self-immolation would make whole
And be restored unto its perfect self.
Here find I peace:—and if they take my life,
To die were but as I should choose to sleep
In some sweet bower of Paradise, where he
I die for lies expecting me, awake!
But better death like this—for absence is
To loving bosoms nothing less than death!—
Than that immortal widowhood of soul,
Which, but for that I suffer now, had been

Our lot eterne. Now, we shall meet again,
Belovèd Cœur! if not on earth, in heaven!
These tears anew baptize me, and the root
Of life they water bears again the bloom
Of love and hope.

Enter JEANNE DE VENDÔME.

Who's there?—Vendôme?

Vendôme. Morn breaks.

Macée. It grieves me much, Vendôme! your foolish faith
Has made you prisoner with me.

Vendôme. Scarcely so.
You are alone in danger: I fear none.
But as a witnesss here detained—no more—
Charged, by Village, with letters from the Queen,
That gave her royal sanction to your lord's
Escape, from his malignant enemies;
As what the King desired, though under influence,
He had no power to order. These, produced
To the good Abbot, might—so thought Village—
Move him to set you free, to follow Cœur.

Macée. Ye little knew L'Ecole. The father acts
Solely by rule. To deed irregular,
Even though an angel vouched it, nought might tempt him.
The intervention of her majesty,

Having no legal warrant, to his mind
Was or impertinence or treason. Straight
He sent, mark you, a messenger to court,
And thus gave notice to my husband's foes.
Hence have we here Trémouille, who breaths malign,
Against me death and vengeance. I am doomed!

Vendôme. Take counsel.

Macée. Well rebuked. I shall do so.
Trémouille, it seems, awaits the fierce Chabannes,
Gone forth on expedition to Fargeau,
And elsewhere—vehement to possess himself
Of my dear lord's estates. Such impious haste
Those cormorants make, to gorge them with the wealth
That once their victim owned. What hear you, Jeanne?

Vendôme. Not half an hour ago, a horseman came,
The avant-courier of the so-feared Chabannes,
Saying his master followed speedily,
With an armed train, picked from the royal guard,
Though for awhile detained by some strange news.

Macée. Strange news? All news is strange!

Vendôme. But this most strange.

Macée. What is it?

Vendôme. Something of the Dauphin. All
I know not clearly. This alone I heard;
That, taking 'vantage of these traitors' absence,
Prince Louis' friends were Charles' attendants now,

Who, shut up in the castle of Mehun,
Suspecting poison, sustenance hath refused.
Macée. That's news, indeed. This heavenly justice answers
What suffering might pray for, and has virtue
To make me strong to bear or to inflict.

MATHIEU D'ECOLE, DUCLERC, SIMONET, TRÉMOUILLE, *and others enter.*

They come whom I must baffle or endure.
D'Ecole. Here, daughter, watch ye?
Macée. And protection seek.
Trémouille. Protection, lady?
Macée. From your malice, which
You miscal justice.
Trémouille. 'Tis justice, when the law's
Insulted, to avenge it on the peccant.
Macée. What seems may not *be* guilt; . . but circumstance
May oft excuse an act, though not in rule:
As when the innocent do hold the sword,
That kills but murders not, in self defence,
Or guards the old and feeble, or sets free
The unjustly captive, though by mortal means.
This last I did—the victim but myself!
Force is repelled by force, and craft by craft.
Trémouille. 'Twas legal force and authorized craft.

Macée. Yes, legalized by robbers for their gain,
And authorized by traitors for their safety;
From whose insidious wiles or violence,
All modes of quittance justice does permit.

Trémouille. Robbers and traitors?

Macée. Ay—no less!

Trémouille. You rave.
Heaven save your reason!

Macée. So it will—it doth!
'Tis you are idiot . . blinded, by the veil
Of custom, to those inner laws that, born
With us, we may suppress, but not repeal:
Not taught, derived, but living in our life
Cogenial and inherent. By these laws,
I judge your laws, and find that I have acted
On the defensive only:—therefore am guiltless
Of any act of treason against the State.
So of this Abbot, here, I make demand,
He set me straight at large.

D'Ecole. I cannot, lady.
My office is specific:—to the letter,
I will perform its duties.

Macée. Office!—duties!—
O spiritless and most insensate clod!
O tablet, for a cenotaph designed,
But uninscribed as yet! O void of faith,
Of charity, and yet ordained to both.

Their minister, who shutst the gate of Hope
On Hope herself, yet at the portal standst
As if thou wert her guard, her servitor,
But art her enemy, yet knowst it not,
So brutal in thy pious ignorance,
Thou slayest her on the threshold of her dwelling,
Then claimest guerdon for defending her,
Thy murdered mistress! Strip thee of thy office,
And take to duties that befit thee better.
These principalities become thee not;—
Some servile task is more within thy scope!

D'Ecole. Lady, you are too bold. Besides, you know not,
'Tis heresy you utter.

Macée. Heresy!
What, then, is truth, if this be heresy?
Is it not truth for woman to be true
To him she loved and wedded? Is it not truth,
When on the judgment seat corruption sits,
And by the altar ignorance adores,
That to the sanctities which guard the hearth
She should appeal, and worship? Or that barred,
As mine is now from me, she should for truth
Dig deep into her heart, and, in its promptings,
Thus recognize the verities of Heaven!

D'Ecole. Beware—lest, to the censure of the State
You suffer now, you should provoke the Church
To couple hers.

Macée. Now, by these saintly shrines!—
Now, by the awful holiness above!—
That Providence which, though invisible,
Watches o'er nations, and avenges wrongs,
Public or private—plants, or else displants
Altars and thrones!—speak your anathema!
'Tis not on me, but on yourselves, ye pour
The dreadful burthen of your dolorous curse;
Which, though it blast me standing in its way,
Dismantles your own altars, overthrows
Your rites, to pieces breaks your images,
And shatters thrones! Poor wretches, blind to fate;
Before the great emotions of the soul,
Ye perish; like the idolatries of old
Before the whirlwind of the wrath of God;—
I scorn—despise; unpitied, pity you!

[*The Convent bell rings loudly.*

Trémouille. That is a peal indeed, bespeaks impatience. [*Simonet goes out.*

Macée. It sounds as it would hurry on my doom!
It sounds as 'twere indeed my passing-bell.
Forgetting to be solemn, in the haste
Of your desire to send my soul to bliss!—
Ye would commit a murder—do it now!

Simonet (*returning*). It is the Count Chabannes.

Macée. I knew it was!

Trémouille expects him, see you not he doth?
I know he brings my sentence from the king,
As men still call the puppet, Charles by name.
These words are treasonous? I'd have them be so!
Forms without power, shews that are substanceless—
Away with them, or with ourselves away!
Better annihilation, than to suffer
The tyrannous yoke of mock authority
That order turns to chaos!

Trémouille. Here's Chabannes.

D'Ecole. Lady, be silent now, and hear the Count.

Macée. I shall, be sure!

Enter CHABANNES, *attended with* Guards.

Chabannes. Hail, to the Consistory!
I bear with me the rescript from king Charles,
Touching this lady.

Macée. Well—the matter?

Chabannes. This.
By the advice of the Grand Council, sitting
Upon the trial of the Argentier,
His Majesty pronounces that the guilty
By his escape hath pardon forfeited,
And merits death; . . but being now in Rome,
And shielded by the Pope, cannot be reached.
Yet, having left in pledge his wife, Macée,
On her must fall the sentence due to him.

Macée. You have made speed from Mehun to Fargeau;
Maurice, besides:—thence, hither, to Beaucaire!

Chabannes. I am not wont to loiter.

Macée. 'Tis well known!
Eager and rapid in all enterprise,
No province, hardly kingdoms, could confine
Chabannes' impetuosity, when moved!
The écorcheur is still the écorcheur;
Rapine and plunder, as of yore, his trade,
And death the meed of whatsoe'er opposed.
Death, too, his own, when justice overtakes.

Chabannes. When overtaken, be it so with us!
Behoves yourself regard your proper state!

Macée. I'm past all fear. Do with me as you list.
I plead not for your mercy. Spare me but
Vain pageantry and hypocritic hymns;—
No show—no pomp—no praise; unwailed, unwept;
I would depart; seeing convention's self
Has crumbled to its base, and faith on earth
Has not a name to live!

Chabannes. No more remains
But in this holy Abbot's hands to place
The mortal writ, under the royal seal.

Macée. The royal seal? I do remember now;
Among the charges brought against my lord,
Was one most foul—that he had caused be made
A forgèd seal with *fleur de lis* engraved,

To serve his merchant gains with Saracens.
Belike, 'tis such a counterfeit ye proffer;—
Who bring such charges falsely, we may deem
Willing, if safely, to incur the guilt.

D'Ecole. If we thought so—

Chabannes. Tush—tush! 'Tis the King's seal,
As with my sword I'll answer! Who gainsays it?

Trémouille. None but the prisoner.

[*Convent bell rings again. Simonet goes out.*

Macée. Some one else! He comes,
By intuition to my soul foretold,
In penitential prayer. Morn broke therewith;
It was hope's day-spring!

Simonet (*returning*). It is her lord, attended
With a legate of the Pope, and divers soldiers,
Who had forced their way with them within our walls,
But that the royal escort, under orders
Of Count Chabannes, prevented it.

Chabannes. Mescems,
A meet precaution I came guarded well.

Simonet. Cœur and the Legate.

Enter CŒUR *with the* Legate.

Cœur. Am I too late?

Macée. No! No!
Here is thy living—thy unburied wife!
Now, living, though once dead to thee and love,

Raised from the dead by love to welcome thee,
Within these arms, now filled with love and thee!
Cœur. My heart is full—amazed, enrapt, possessed
With thy incredible fidelity,
Divine Macée!—intrepid and devote—
Thou hast as 'twere laid down thy life for me!
—And now come I, to make like sacrifice,
Unless these men be pitiful to both.
Chabannes. You'd taken means to force us into pity.
Your band of bravoes shewed no yielding mood!
Cœur. You know, Chabannes, that you have troops without,
Outnumbering my poor crew.
Chabannes. I am safe in that!
Nothing but magic had enabled yours
To overmaster mine. Not being so,
Thy pageant suite I scorn.
Macée. I'll drop no tear—
Nor shall irresolution mar a feature;
And when I speak, my voice shall yet be firm.
Chabannes. Sir, hear you me?
Cœur. Right well, I thank thee.
What! wouldst thou have me plead? Then look at me,
Or her! If either flinch, contemn us! But
If both be stedfast, then—thyself being brave—
Respect in us the virtue thou hast shown.

Who most excite compassion, most disdain:
The gladiator who despises death,
The gazing vulgar clamour for his life.
Be not less generous than the herd thou leadest.
Chabannes. Hast thou no more to urge?
Cœur. No—not to thee!
But with Mathieu D'Ecole, the Abbot here,
The legate of his holiness the Pope
Is charged to speak in his great master's name.
D'Ecole. Say on, right reverend legate.
Legate. I am bid
By the most gracious Nicholas, to say,
That the good merchant Cœur, a tonsured clerk,
Has been unjustly, by the laic power,
Condemned; yet being prisoner held within
A convent's sacred walls, though innocent;
The guilt of his escape, being such a clerk,
Was greater made by that: . . . in which same guilt,
Both he who fled and she who stayed behind,
Were subject unto censure. But his holiness,
On the premise consulting, by the force
Of apostolic mercy dealt to him,
On their repentance, has absolved the twain;
Commanding you by me, to let them go.
D'Ecole. How shall I answer it to the King of France?
Chabannes. Well said, D'Ecole! The King of France in us,

Forbids this interference. Here's his warrant
Upon the life of both.

Trémouille. Foes of such craft
Should have the speedier riddance.

Cœur (*passing over with Macée to Chabannes*). Let us pass!

Chabannes. You would not brawl within this holy place?

Cœur. Therefore, I say, let us pass forth together!
Your troops exceed in strength and number mine—
The Church absolves, and gives us passage free—
Let the State's quarrel be without decided;
We'll prove the issue, when beyond these walls.
It is a little grace, if you accord,
May bring you larger gain.

Chabannes. I'll not accord it.
Poor trafficker in promises, who'd trade
On credit now substantial means are gone!

Cœur. For your own good be counselled.

Macée. Dearest Cœur!
Why supplicate you thus? Here we can die,
As well as there! Let them accumulate
Crime on their crime;—the sin of sacrilege
Add to the murder they commit in thought,
As they already have that murder added
To most unparalleled ingratitude!

Chabannes. That word has stoned my heart! Thy debtor, Cœur,

Is now thy creditor. What once was thine
Is mine. For that arrest once meant for me,
I can repay you now in kind.
What shouts [*Shouts heard without.*
Are those?

Enter MICHELET.

Hoa, there! 'Tis Captain Michelet!
Doubtless (*to Cœur*) he has seized upon your coward crew!
(*To Michelet*) I saw you enter—you are vigilant!
You've come in time, good Captain Michelet.
Bring in your guard.

Michelet. I was about to do so.

[*Exit, after speaking to Chabannes' guards.*

[*Shouts again.*

Trémouille. Ha! that sounds well!—they're zealous in our cause.

Macée (*apart*). Now I can smile at this. O, fondly thought—
That to be virtuous was to be revered!
And Cœur still thinks, as he has ever thought,
'Tis not ingratitude, but fear sins in them.
'Tis well the brave and wise for motive own
Virtue, not guerdon. Well for me, I share
The noble consciousness which now I note,
From his calm brow, unflushed, unmoved cheek,

Supports his soul—that he no act hath done,
But what partook of greatness—that to him,
His country owes deliverance—that to him,
His monarch was indebted for his crown—
And not a citizen but benefits
By his undaunted enterprize; whereby
France has received new life-blood, vigour new,
Power that was not, till Cœur created it.
And if for this the lightning that destroys,
But consecrates, strike him again; and now
For ruin ultimate, without reprieve;
Let it be so!—For glory shall descend,
And fill the space should clip his statue in!

[*Shouts again heard without.*

Cœur. Fear not those shouts, Macée! Them, on sure grounds,
I otherwise interpret than my foes.

JEAN DU VILLAGE, ALAIN CHARTIER, MICHELET, Troops *and* Monks *enter.*

Chartier. Stay, Michelet! To all now present greeting,
In me the bearer own of royal power.
Chabannes, Trémouille, must both yield place to me

Chabannes. Not without further warrant.

Chartier. Rightly pleaded.
Then, Michelet, there are your prisoners!

[*Michelet arrests Chabannes and Trémouille.*

Chabannes. What mean you, captain?

Trémouille. Take you us for them!

[*Pointing to Macée and Cœur.*

Michelet. In am no speaker, count. I but obey
King Louis' orders.

Macée. Louis, king?

Chartier. He is.
Self-starved, King Charles has died; and Louis reigns.

Macée. O, mystery of justice! Yet instruct me—
How bears it on Chabannes and on Trémouille?

Chartier. Might they not better tell you?

Chabannes. Not a word.

Trémouille. Unless it were a wizard's spell, to harm!

Macée. Their lips have not such music, Chartier!
I should prefer their utterance to yours.

Chartier. I'll speak, then. Louis, being king, *will* reign:
And that he may do so, at once disgraces
George la Trémouille and Antoine de Chabannes;
For their offences proved against himself,
Of every office that they once possessed
They are deprived; and, in the Louvre, condemned,
First to imprisonment:—next, banishment:—
And confiscation absolute of all.

Macée. And what for Cœur?

Chartier. Ask of your faithful steward,
Whose vigilance has brought much good about.

Village. Most honoured lady, here is the decree,
The letters-patent under Louis' hand:
"That, on remonstrance made, his majesty,
"Touching the life and welfare of Jacques Cœur,
"Sometime his royal father's argentier,
"Who, by the false reports of his ill-wishers,
"Had been unrighteously despoiled of all;
"To him just restitution should be made,
"Both of the lands that De Chabannes had seized,
"And other the estates whereof he was
"Rightful possessor and true lord."

Cœur. Rejoice,
Beloved Macee!

Chartier. This Jean Village has done—
And 'twas his speed kept measure with my own.
So when arrived, I found him there before me,
Even in the court of Louis, with credentials
Won from the new-made king. To which credentials,
Even now, the troops Chabannes brought hither yielding,
At once allegiance swore to royal Louis.
Doubtless, you heard their shouts.

Cœur. Ay, did we, sir;
As likewise did Chabannes, and you, Trémouille!
—Unworthy men! had ye but shown remorse,
How slight soever, for your cruelties,
For your evasion means had I provided,
Which now would come too late.

Chartier. 'Tis better so.
Captain! you have your orders: take your prisoners,
And hold them in safe custody.

[*Chabannes and Trémouille are led out, guarded.*

Cœur. Their silence
Bespeaks profound despair. Macée! beshrew me,
Compassion for their doom, despite their guilt,
Afflicts me more than I had thought it would.

Macée. And I, too, may rejoice, but not exult.
Sin leaves its scars upon the pardoned soul;
Forgiveness woundeth more than punishment.
Had I died for you, I had triumphed more,
Than now I may. But this more sober joy
Heals more than wilder transport. *Death heals all!*
The bruisèd spirit which I bear within
Is prescient of departure. Better, Cœur!
A few few days of love and confidence,
Than many years of jealousy and doubt.

[*Macée buries her face within Cœur's bosom.*

THE END.

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